ROMAN EMPEROR WORSHIP

LOUIS MATTHEWS SWEET

WORLD WORSHIPS SERIES

BY

LOUIS MATTHEWS SWEET

ROMAN EMPEROR WORSHIP

THE VERIFICATION OF CHRISTIANITY

DIVINATION AND PROPHECY—A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION

A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

A SYSTEM OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

RICHARD G. BADGER, PUBLISHER, BOSTON

ROMAN EMPEROR WORSHIP

BY

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY FATHER

AMOS LEWIS SWEET, M.D.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, CLASS OF 1866

WHO

LEFT US WHEN THIS WORK

IN WHICH HE WAS DEEPLY INTERESTED

HAD JUST BEGUN

"How well he fell asleep!
Like some proud river, widening toward the sea;
Calmly and grandly, silently and deep,
Life ioined eternity."

"Reliquos enim deos accepimus, Cæsares dedimus."

—*Valerius Maximus.*

"Stulte verebor, ipse quum faciam, Deos."

Nero in "Octavia"
Act ii. l. 450.

FOREWORD

THE following pages contain, in substance, a dissertation presented to the authorities of New York University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate in Philosophy.

The work now appears in print and is submitted to the judgment of the public with the approval of the University. The research which has gone to the making of the book was carried on and much of the actual writing done in the Latin Seminar Room at University Heights.

I wish to put on record my sense of privilege in having access to this noble sanctuary of learning and the incomparable classical library which it contains, especially as this has involved many hours of fellowship with the presiding genius of the place, Professor Ernest G. Sihler, Ph.D., himself an embodiment of the best traditions of modern scholarship. My work has been done *con amore* and it is with the deepest satisfaction that I now connect it with the University, the Seminar Room and Dr. Sihler.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Roman Imperial Cult began with the first Cæsar and continued until the final overthrow of paganism in the Empire. An exhaustive study of the Cult in all its ramifications would practically involve a survey of Roman history during the imperial epoch and would transcend all reasonable limits. A bald analytical review, merely, of the data which have passed under my own eye in the course of this investigation, would break bounds. A rigid and somewhat painful process of elimination has, therefore, been exercised both in the use and presentation of the available data in this field. Particularly in the matter of the local origins and spread throughout the empire of the ruler-cult I have been compelled to turn a deaf ear to many alluring suggestions. There are in this region many urgent problems awaiting solution, which I have not ventured even to broach. They can be solved only by the examination and analysis of hundreds of additional inscriptions and historic references —an undertaking which waits upon occasion. A

fit and appropriate opportunity for a more adequate and exhaustive presentation of the theme may at some future time offer itself. Meanwhile what is herein contained may be counted as vital prolegomena to a great and still largely unworked field of investigation.

"Ars longa, vita brevis est."

The quite sufficient task, which I have actually set for myself, is two-fold. First, to exhibit the grounds upon which my conviction rests that the Roman system of imperial deification has a broader context in antiquity, and strikes its roots more deeply into the past, than has often been realized even by those most conversant with the facts.

Second, to exhibit the fact and to unfold the significance of the fact, that the imperial cult, to a surprising extent, displaced and superseded, not only the hereditary and traditional gods of the Romans, but also absorbed and subordinated the imported cults, both Greek and Oriental, which were superimposed upon the native worship, hastened the decay and overthrow of the entire syncretic aggregation and gradually gathered to itself the whole force of the empire, becoming in the end the one characteristic and universal expression of ancient paganism.

ROMAN EMPEROR-WORSHIP

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CHAPTER I

THE RULER-CULT IN EARLY ANTIQUITY

1. In Babylonia

THE absolute beginning of the ancient and widespread custom of deifying human beings cannot now be discovered. Historic dawns are for the most part veiled in impenetrable mist and when the sun has fairly risen and landscapes are clear and open before us, human affairs are already midway of something,—beginnings are already lost in the distance. Of this much, however, we may be certain,—the custom was already established at the beginning of that portion of history the records of which have come down to us. The most ancient documents afford, once and again, most striking parallels with later developments in the Orient and among the Greeks

and Romans. A dim and far-away reflection of the movement in its first phases may be afforded by the great Babylonian Epic in which the hero, Gilgamesh, becomes a solar-deity with accompanying worship. Another semi-mythical hero, Etana, is also elevated to godhood. That this elevation of heroes to divine honors is something of an innovation is indicated by the fact that hero-deities do not enter the celestial sphere occupied by other gods but are kept in the nether world.[1]

It was a very general custom, also, to grant divine honors after death to prominent persons whose careers made a deep impression upon the minds of posterity. Moreover (and the fact is of vital importance to this study) well-known historical personages whose reigns we can date and place were the recipients of divine honors not only after death but during their life-times. This is demonstrable in several instances.

Both Gudea, *patesi* of Shirpurla about 3000 B.C., and Entemena of Lagash about the same date, were deified, receiving offerings and appearing in tablets with the determinative for deity connected with their names. The latter's statue was set up in the temple E-gissh-vigal at Babylon.

[1] Consult Jastrow: *Religion of Assyria and Babylonia* (N. Y., 1898), pp. 470f.

The proof has been pointed out to me [2] in a date list of Abeshu (2049-2021 B.C.), the eighth king of the First Dynasty, in which appears the statement: "The Year in which he (Abeshu) decorated the statue of Entemena for his godhead." The same king erected his own statue in the same temple.

Gimil Sin (2500 B.C.) was deified in his own life-time and had a temple of his own at Lagash. Dungi, of Ur (2000 B.C.) was deified. "Shargani-Sharri, Semitic king of Agade, writes his name commonly, though not always, with the divine determinative, and Naram-Sin has his name seldom without it." [3] These instances are sufficiently numerous to indicate that the custom of deifying rulers both before and after death was quite common.

[2] By Prof. R. W. Rogers, of Drew Theological Seminary, to whom I am also indebted for the translations which appear in the text. For the antiquity of the custom consult Jastrow: *Civilization of Assyria and Babylonia,* p. 336.

[3] Dr. Rogers. The same competent authority says: "Deification was at that time evidently begun even during the king's life-time." So, also, Jastrow, *Religion of Assyria and Babylonia,* p. 561. Prof. Jastrow says: "We may expect to come across a god Hammurabi some day." Dr. Rogers tells me (1918) that this King's name actually appears coupled with the gods in oath formulas. Jastrow's references on this subject should be carefully noted. In the famous "Lament of Tabi-utul-Enlil," 2d tablet, occurs this line: "The glorification of the king I made like unto that of a god" (Jastrow: *Civilization of Assyria and Babylonia,* p. 478). The context shows that the king's homage was an essential element of religious duty.

2. In Persia

How ancient the idea of a royal divinity among the Persians was we have no way of knowing. It thoroughly permeates the Zoroastrian documents and must, therefore, be as ancient as they.

The Zoroastrian instance is of particular value because it is really alien to the system as such, and reveals more clearly than elsewhere the ruling ideas which produced it. The Zoroastrian system of cosmogony begins with Ahura Mazda, the creator, and ends with Saoshyant, the restorer, of all things. Throughout this entire cycle of cosmic history there is an unbroken succession of leaders and rulers possessing one element in common, the so-called "divine glory." This element corresponds, *exceptis excipiendis,* to the "divine blood" or ichor in the veins of the Egyptian Kings. A brief résumé of the facts will serve to bring to light the essential principles involved. In Yast XIX [4] sixteen sections are devoted to the praise of this heavenly and kingly glory, which is transmitted through the line of Iranian Kings, both legendary and historical, to Saoshyant. In this Yast,[5] the glory is spoken of as a quality "that cannot be seized." Elsewhere [6] it is said

[4] Zamyad Yast—see S. B. E., v. 23, pp. 286 *seq.*
[5] XIX. 55 *et passim.*
[6] Aban Yast, XLII—*cf.* Zamyad 51, 56, etc.

that this glory took refuge in the sea during the reigns of foreign dynasties and wicked kings. This means that the divine quality and dignity belong exclusively to the legitimate line of Iranian Kings.[7] The Dinkard [8] deals with the descent of the heavenly glory from king to king. The royal genealogy is a part of the system. It has been well said that this passage would serve as a short history of the Iranian monarchy. The person of the legitimate ruler is sacrosanct because of an unique divine substance, imparting a corresponding divine quality which puts him on a level with the first man, with the Amesha Spentas, with Zarathustra himself, and with Saoshyant, the restorer, all of whom with his royal ancestors are manifestations and embodiments of Ahura Mazda. Two tendencies of thought, moving towards a common center, meet in this conception, which, as I have said, is really alien to the spirit of Mazdaism, namely, an excessive idealization of royalty and a tendency to materialize the divine glory.[9]

This deification of the Persian rulers persists through all later history. In a passage of Æschy-

[7] See Bundahis XXI:32, 33; XXXIV:4.

[8] Bk. VII, Ch. I.

[9] Herodotus (I:131) expresses the spirit of Mazdaism when he says of the Persians: "*ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατάπερ οἱ Ἕλληνες.*"

lus [10] Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, is addressed as consort and mother of the god of the Persians. Diodorus Siculus [11] states that Darius was addressed as a god by the Egyptians, adding, quite incorrectly, "*μόνον τῶν ἁπάντων βασιλέων.* Mommsen points out that uniformly the title of the trilingual inscriptions at Naksi Rustam is "The Mazda-servant God Artaxerxes, King of Kings of the Arians, of divine descent," [12] while we have a palace inscription [13] of the Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235 A.D.) *Ἐπιδημία θεοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου.* This brings us through the Graeco-Asiatic blending to the Roman Imperial house, well on toward the end of its history. A Roman emperor deified in Persia and in Persian style presents a striking example of historic continuity. Nor is this by any means the end of the story as we shall see later.[14]

3. In China

So far as China is concerned I need simply call attention to the fact that in addition to the regular process whereby deceased ancestors are raised to

[10] Persae, v. 157 *θεοῦ μεν εὐνάτειρὰ Περσῶν θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ ἔφυς·*
[11] I:95.
[12] *Μάσδασνος θεὸς Ἀρταξάρης βασιλεὺς βασιλέων Ἀριάνῶν ἐκ γένους θεῶν* (C. I. G., 4675.) The Arsacide title was nearly identical. See Momm. Röm. Gesch. Achtes B. Kap. XIV, pp. 414, 420.
[13] C. I. G., 4483.
[14] Below, p. 115.

the position of deities, a certified group of instances occur, some of them very ancient, in which conspicuous individuals were elevated to a special place among the deities. For example, Fu Hi (B.C. 2952-2838), noted as a great civilizer, was elevated to god-hood. Nung Shen and How Chi, founder of the Chow dynasty, were both elevated to the position of gods of agriculture.[15] They were both kings who had done much for this branch of applied science. The living emperor during the entire imperial epoch has been an object of worship throughout China, the most universal of all the gods of China.[16]

4. In Japan

Shintoism, which is usually considered the one peculiarly indigenous and characteristic religious development of Japan, involves the deification or quasi-deification of the Emperor. This deification is the core of the system which is for that reason frequently called "Mikadoism." [17] The Japanese have also a well-developed ancestor-worship which some scholars look upon as an exotic from China.[18]

[15] See Ross: *Original Religion of China,* p. 154.
[16] De Groot: *The Religion of the Chinese,* pp. 65f; Moore: *History of Religions* (N. Y., 1914), p. 12.
[17] Griffis: *Religion of Japan,* N. Y., 1895, pp. 45f.
[18] Moore: *History of Religions,* p. 110.

5. In Egypt

The extreme antiquity of the custom of apotheosizing kings as well as its persistence to later times finds yet another illustration in the history of Egypt. At a very early period, before the earliest pyramid texts, there was brought about, probably through the influence of the priests of Heliopolis, a synthesis of primitive solar pantheism with the deification of the state in the person of the *deceased* ruler.[19] This takes us back to at least 2750 B.C. The king ascends to the realm of the sun-god; later becomes his assistant and secretary, then his son and finally becomes identified with him. He is frequently spoken of as god, e.g., he is called "a great god." [20]

At the time when the fourth dynasty was succeeded by the fifth, which was an usurping and

[19] Renouf: Hibbert Lectures, 1879 (London, '84), pp. 161f, *cf.* Breasted: *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt,* (N. Y., 1912), pp. 121f.

[20] The following text (Breasted, *R. A. E.*) gives the technical phraseology of deification (Vol. I, Sec. 169). "Snefru: *King of Upper and Lower Egypt; favorite of the two goddesses; Lord of Truth; Golden Horus;* Snefru. Snefru, *Great God, Who is Given Satisfaction, Stability, Life, Health, all Joy Forever." Cf.,* Secs. 176, 236, 264, same volume, in which expressions equally strong occur. For the origin of the title *Son of Re* consult Rawlinson: *Egypt,* vii, pp. 60, 84. For the details of *applied* deification see Erman: *Life in Ancient Egypt,* pp. 56, 60, 73, 77, 503. Almost all details found later, including the marriage of brothers and sisters, go back to the earliest days. The royal title "Son of the Sun" is found among the Incas of Peru.

conquering dynasty championed and established by the priests, the theory was introduced and successfully promulgated that the reigning king was the literal and physical Son of Re. This "state fiction," as Prof. Breasted calls it, had a long and interesting history.[21] It prevailed without question in Egypt until the latest period of antiquity.

[21] Breasted, *R. A. E.*, II, pp. 187f. The full account is given here and should be studied in detail.

CHAPTER II

THE RULER-CULT IN THE MACEDONIAN-GREEK PERIOD

1. Alexander the Great

THE theory that the King of Egypt was the son of the sun-god in the literal sense was in full operation when Alexander the Great entered Egypt as its conqueror; for he went at once to the distant Oasis of Amon, at Siwa, in the Lybian desert, and was there formally proclaimed Son of Re, or Amon—hence, legitimate ruler of Egypt. The story of Alexander's apotheosis was incorporated into the Romance of Alexander, called Pseudo-Callisthenes, which was translated into Latin near the end of the third century A.D., or at the beginning of the fourth, by Alexander Polemius.[22]

There is another line of continuity here, also.

[22] Consult Teuffel: *History of Roman Literature* (Eng. Tr.)., Sec. 399; *cf.* also Maspero: *Comment Alexandre,* etc., *Ecole de Hautes Etudes Annuaire,* 1897; C. W. Miller: *Didot Ed. Arrian sub Scriptores Rerum Alexandri;* Plutarch: *Alex.,* 52-55; Diog. Laert., v. 1.

In the Westcar papyrus (2350 B.C.) the idea of the sonship of the Pharaoh to the sun deity takes the form of a folk tale and, somewhat conventionalized in form, appears in sculpture on several buildings, notably at Luxor and Der-el-Bahri. It is to be noted that even at this early date the divine king theory involves a combination of the political motive with the religious. Kingship, according to this system, is a divine institution—the king, a divine being.[23]

We have next briefly to trace the continuity of the Egyptian divinely-begotten king theory through later history. It has one early aberrant development in the case of Hephæstion, the friend of Alexander, who, according to Diodorus,[24] was deified in obedience to a specific command of the Oracle of Amon.

2. The Ptolemies

In the case of the Ptolemies (330-30 B.C.) the Macedonian and Egyptian traditions are thoroughly blended and deification marks the entire history. The only Ptolemaic kings for whose

[23] See below, page 61, n. 108. For the Westcar papyrus, see Erman: *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 373f.

[24] XVII. 115. We shall note other cases where the shadow of divine royalty, falling upon a king's relative or favorite, seems to possess the power to create divinity.

deification we have no documentary or epigraphic evidence are the minor individuals about whom we know practically nothing.

In a text [25] of the year 312-311 B.C. Ptolemy I (Soter 323-283 B.C.) is repeatedly called "Son of the Sun" in old Egyptian style. An inscription of the Cyclades makes the claim that these islanders first gave Ptolemy I divine honors. The Rhodians (B.C. 306) advanced the same claim. They first called him Soter and established shrines and sacrifices in his honor.[26]

In the next reign, that of Ptolemy II (Philadelphus 283-247) the process of deification attains unexampled elaboration.[27] It should be studied with some care as it throws light upon everything that follows.

On the Mendes Stele, Ptolemy is designated: "The lord of the land, the lord of power, Meri-amon-user-ka-ra, the son of Re, begotten of his body, who loves him, the lord of diadems, Pto-

[25] See Mahaffy: *Greek Life and Thought,* pp. 180-192.

[26] See Mahaffy: *History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty,* pp. 43, 44. Authorities are somewhat at variance as to whether this deification was Greek or Oriental. We shall have good reason to conclude that it was both.

[27] The idea of Revillout (revue Egyptologique I, 1880) that genuine deification began with the second Ptolemy is untenable for the simple reason that it had already been in operation for centuries. It was (*sicut supra*) greatly elaborated in this reign. For the meaning of "Soter" see Mahaffy: *Empire of the Ptolemies,* p. 62 n3, *cf.* p. 125.

lemy, the ever living." On the same stone, Ptolemy's famous wife, the first woman of antiquity, so far as I am aware, to attain such honors, is spoken of as the "divine Arsinoë Philadelphos." For the sake of its bearing upon the later history of deification the method of deification followed in the case of Ptolemy and Arsinoë should be carefully noted:

On coins she was deified with her husband—the two pictured together as gods and designated θεοὶ ἀδελφόι.

She was made officially συνναῖος with the accepted "great gods" throughout Egypt.

After death she was granted a Κανηφόρος. . . . She was coupled on a basis of equality with Ptah, as in the expression (from a demotic stele) "Secretary of Ptah and Arsinoë Philadelphos." [28]

Votive inscriptions and temples (called Arsinœia) were dedicated to her in many places.

She was made the tutelary goddess of the Nome adjacent to Lake Moeris. I have dwelt at length upon this instance chiefly for the reason that the operation of the machinery of deification is so complete and typical at this early date. Arsinoë died in 270 B.C. The bestowment of divine honors including a permanent priesthood, was al-

[28] See Krall: *Studien*, ii, p. 48.

ready a finished art, leaving little room or need for subsequent elaboration.

The dynastic history of the Ptolemies offers a number of facts full of interest and suggestion from the point of view of this discussion:

The formation, almost at once, of a divine dynasty each successive member of which has a *birthright* participation in deity. An inscription of Ptolemy III [29] reads thus: "The Great King, Ptolemy, Son of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoë, Brother Gods; Children of King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice, Saviour Gods; the descended on his father's side from Heracles, son of Zeus, on his mother's side from Dionysus, son of Zeus," etc.

The assumption, immediately upon accession to power, of a throne-name significant of deity, coronation and deification thus becoming coincident. An interesting and instructive side-light is thrown upon the practice among the Ptolemies by this list of throne-names.[30] Not the least suggestive item is the evident fact that the implied claim of deity becomes stronger as the list goes

[29] C. I. G., 5127. Boeck, in his note on C. I. G. 2620 (given below) holds that these kings were not deified during their lifetimes, but more or less promptly after death. In this judgment I cannot concur. The evidence is all in favor of the statement in the text.

[30] This list transliterated by F. Ll Griffith is published by Mahaffy: *Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, pp. 255, 256.

on. The most frequently used and most significant of the formal titles of these rulers, male and female, are Εὐεργέτης, Σωτὴρ, Ἀδελφός.[31]

In this connection attention should be called to the Decree of Canopus.[32] This inscription of Ptolemy III, which is dated from the temple of the Benefactor gods in Canopus, speaks of Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoë θεοὶ ἀδελφόι and Berenice, his sister and wife, as "Benefactor gods."

The decree (which I merely summarize) increases preëxisting honors so as to include the entire dynasty under the three titles given above. It was also voted to "perform everlasting honors" to Queen Berenice, the deceased daughter of Ptolemy and his wife. This princess was granted temples, feasts, hymns, offerings etc. in great profusion.

We have also to note the frequent bestowal of special divine names upon individual members of the dynasty: e.g., Ptolemy V (205-181 B.C.), by decree was called θεὸς Ἐπιφανὴς Εὐχάριστος and he and his wife, Cleopatra I, were entitled θεοὶ ἐπιφανεῖς and the latter appears on coins as Isis.

[31] The term ἀδελφὸς in the phrase θεοὶ ἀδελφόι first applied to Ptolemy II and Arsinoë implies a double kinship, in lineage, and also in ruler-ship.

[32] See Mahaffy: *Empire of the Ptolemies,* pp. 226f. and Brugsch: *Egypt and the Pharaohs,* p. 106.

Ptolemy IX (146-117 B.C.), and Ptolemy XIII (80-51 B.C.), each received the title Νεὸς Διόνυσος.[33] [34] From the inscriptions, it is clear that existing organizations of priests and worshipers were utilized for the advancement of the ruler-cult. This tendency is evident also among the Romans.[35]

The marriage of the royal brothers and sisters of this line, one of the major scandals of all history, was based upon the assumption of deity and was intended to keep the blood of the royal gods pure.[36]

We find here a manifestation of the tendency, so strong among the Romans, to link the reigning dynasty with the Olympian deities, either by genealogical descent or simply by common formulas.[37]

The dramatic fact emerges from this history that the last member of this proud dynasty was Cæsarion, Julius Cæsar's son by Cleopatra (47-

[33] C. I. G. 2620. This inscription from the island of Cyprus which is attributed by Boeck to Ptolemy IX (Εὐεργέτης II) though there is a bare possibility that it belongs to Ptolemy III reads thus: One Kallipos is spoken of as "ἀρχιερεύοντα τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν περὶ Διόνυσον κάι θεοῦς Εὐεργέατς τεχνιτῶν," etc.

[34] For the connection of M. Antony with Dionysus see Plutarch: Antony c. 24. This reference gives us a definite line of tendency from the Ptolemies to the Romans.

[35] Compare Hirsch. p. 835. n. 9.

[36] Maspero: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[37] Recur to p. 28, note 29, and compare the following inscription to the third Ptolemy, found in a Greek temple at Ramleh: Κὰι Θεοῖς ἀδελφοῖς Δὶι Ὀλυμπιώι κὰι Δὶι Συνωμσόιωι τοῦς βώμους, etc.

30 B.C.), who was called Ptolemy Cæsar, and ascended his mother's tottering throne as the god Philopator Philometor. Here once again we have direct connection between Greece, the Orient and Rome. Cæsar's son was deified in Egypt just about the time that Cæsar conquered Pharnaces at Zela.[38]

3. In Greece

In order to complete a rapid sketch of the general movement which culminated in the deification of the Roman Emperors, we must now retrace our steps a little, chronologically speaking, in order to be in at the beginning of things among the Greeks. An actual beginning may be traceable here. Dr. Sihler asserts [39] that according to the true and original text there is no actual deification of men in Homer. In the Iliad, as the text now stands, this is true. Even Heracles is overcome by fate, dies and departs to the realm of the shades. In the present text of the Odyssey, however (Bk. II, 601 ff.), Heracles has taken his place among the Immortals and has a goddess for his wife.[40]

[38] 47 B.C.
[39] T. A., p. 68.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 69. Interesting parallels to this case are found in connection with Erechtheus, who in Homer (Il. Bk. ii, ll. 672-4) is simply a buried hero, while in 5th Cen. inscriptions he is assimilated to Poseidon—C. I. A.: I, 387; III, 276, 815; IV, 556c.

Two things are clear from this. First, that some time between the formation of the original Homeric text and the present one the belief in the transition of mortals into the company and felicity of the gods has found open expression. Second, the conception of the hero who is, so to say, a superman, easily lends itself to the idea of apotheosis. The fundamental fact is that men do not need to be magnified very greatly to bring them over the rather vague line which separates them from gods. We must agree with the judgment of Dr. Sihler [41] that gods and men are essentially the same, "apart from immortality and an irrevocable title to happiness." The same scholar points out [42] that the favor of gods extended to heroes for their character and deeds is the beginning of hero-worship. This latter cult, an entirely spontaneous and popular movement, was very widely disseminated and combined in various ways with the worship of the gods. This far-reaching cult carries us already a long way toward deification, because historically it so often involved the junction of gods and men in common lines of descent.

cf. Farnell: *Cults of Greek States,* Vol. IV, pp. 49f. Asclepius, who is neither god nor hero in Homer (Il. ii, 729-732), is Son of Apollo in Pausanias (ii:26), and the Dioscuroi who attain godhood between the Iliad and Odyssey, *cf.* Il. iii, 236; Od., xi:300; see Wassner: *De Heroum apud Graecos Cultu,* Pt. 2.

[41] *Op. cit.,* p. 68.

[42] *Op. cit.,* p. 74.

One leading motive for the establishment and spread of the hero-cult was the claim on the part of tribes, families, and leading individuals to divine descent.[43]

Moreover, it is clear that gods and heroes not infrequently changed places—the hero rising to godhead and receiving worship and the god being depressed to the hero level.[44] As a matter of fact, any essential distinction between gods and heroes is done away in the fact already stated that at least Heracles and the Dioscuroi were both heroes and gods; and that many heroes, at a very early date, had temples and all the paraphernalia of worship.[45] It is undoubtedly true that the faint and wandering line of demarkation between gods and men, on the one hand, made easy the process of deification by removing or minimizing any shock which might be felt in applying divine categories to beings otherwise ob-

[43] According to Döllinger such claims were urged even on behalf of the founders of trade-guilds and industrial corporations. H. J., Sec. 67.

[44] *Ibid.*, Sec. 68.

[45] The gods and heroes were sometimes honored in conjunction; e.g., Hermes and Heracles, C. I. G., Ins. Mar. Aeg., 1091, Hermes and Minyas, C. I. G., Sept., 3218.

Sometimes, apparently heroes have been constructed from divine epithets, viz., Καρνεῖος, from Apollo. See Farnell: *op. cit.*, IV, p. 135; occasionally gods and heroes have been confused, *ibid.*, p. 151. For connection between hero-worship and ancestor-worship, see below, p. 46, note 67. For the universality of hero-worship, see Ramsay: *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, I, p. 384; for Heroes as Kings; Harrison: *Prolegomena to Study of Greek Religion*, p. xiv. *Cf.* Plut. Cleom., xxxix.

viously human. On the other hand, it tended to produce skepticism as to the specific character of the gods such as we find in Euhemerus and Lucretius.

Two items, before we take up Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great again, deserve special mention. The first is the instance mentioned by Herodotus,[46] where a Spartan king made the charge that the prince who was nominally his son was actually the son of the hero Astrabakos, who had become embodied and taken the form of the royal husband. This I take to be a distinct echo of the Egyptian theory or dogma which ascribes a divine genesis to the Pharaohs through an actual embodiment of the sun-god. The second instance is that of Titus Quintus Flamininus (sec. Macedonian War, 200-197 B.C.),[47] to whom the Chalcidians dedicated temples and altars, made offerings and sang pæans. In these dedications and acclamations, Flamininus was named in company with Zeus, Apollo, Heracles, Roma and Fides Romæ. He was called, in what is clearly an echo of the Egyptian habit: "Savior Titus" (Σωτήρ, etc.).

We are to note, again, the combination of a living deified Roman dignitary with the Olympian

[46] 6.69.
[47] Plutarch: Flamininus c. XVI.

deities. Here also we have one of the earliest appearances of the Roma cult, the expression of a tendency which continued and increased in later times to personify and deify the Roman state. It is not to be forgotten or under-estimated that these were lifetime honors bestowed upon men who were not actually of the blood royal, but who possessed and exercised, in certain local jurisdictions, *de facto* powers of royalty. These Chalcidians, moreover, were following an example already two centuries old, for the Spartan general, Lysander, had received almost identical honors at the Hellespont in 405 B.C.[48] More directly in line with the historical movement, is the case of Philip of Macedon. According to Pausanias,[49] Philip built a temple at Olympia in which images of his dynasty were kept. This was in 338 B.C. And, strikingly enough, the king was murdered at the very time when, clothed in the dignity of membership among the Olympians, he was presented to the people as a god. This is important because it establishes the fact that Alexander had an hereditary claim to divinity, established and widely acknowledged within the limits of his father's domains, before he allowed himself to be acclaimed as the son of Amon Re, in Egypt.

[48] Plutarch: Lysander, c. 18.
[49] 5.20.9-10—see Sihler, T. A., p. 124.

We have thus already discovered several lines of communication through which from primitive times to the Roman era the ancient tradition of deified men might easily have been handed down.

4. Greek-Asiatic Dynasties

The Seleucidæ and Attilidæ,[50] Græco-Asiatic dynasties of Antioch and Pergamos, may be dismissed with a sentence. The history is quite parallel with that of the Ptolemies. Seleucus I (312-281 B.C.) received divine honors at least by 281 B.C.[51] Antiochus I (281-261 B.C.) was called Σωτήρ and Antiochus II (261-246) was called θεός. Deification, in several instances, if not always, was accomplished in the life-time of the king.[52]

[50] For Roman Emperor-Worship in Asia Minor, see below, p. 79.

[51] See Hirsch. p. 834, n. 4 for references.

[52] In connection with Attalus and Eumenes we have a group of inscriptions (C. I. G., Nos. 3067-3070) which show that certain members of the Association of actors of Teos, who had charge of public games in general, were specifically appointed priests of the ruling dynasty and received honors as such. No. 3068 gives a good idea of such inscriptions. It refers to the presentation of a crown in the theatre to one who has become ἀγωνοθέτης καὶ ἱερεὺς βασιλέως Εὐμένου, etc. No. 3070 is still more specific as to the divine status of the king. Attalus Philadelphus is agonothete and priest θεοῦ Εὐμένου ἀρισταίου. Others of the same general tenor might be cited from later times.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNINGS OF THE RULER-CULT AMONG THE ROMANS

1. The Universality of Deification in Paganism

THE early development and widespread prevalence of the *great-man* cult, to designate it by a term sufficiently broad to cover all the facts, are not without immediate bearing upon the question now before us—the beginning of this cult among the Romans.

It is not merely that we are able to trace a number of interlacing lines of historical transmission from age to age and from land to land, as indicated at the close of the last section—in this way connecting the Roman custom with the outside world and with earlier times. These inter-connections are important enough but not so important as a certain general fact or principle which we may discover even where no direct connection can be detected. That principle is this: Whatever may be the reason for it, a matter to be dis-

cussed later, polytheists exhibit everywhere a spontaneous tendency to include great and powerful human personalities among the objects of their worship. This conclusion is inevitable from the facts. It is impossible to suppose that this mode of worship started from a single centre and spread to the boundaries of the world. It has sprung up spontaneously everywhere on pagan soil, because it is *universally indigenous to that soil.*

2. Deification and Mythology

This conclusion is of the utmost importance not merely because of the light it throws upon the origin of the ruler-cult among the Romans, significant as it is in that respect, but also because it really involves the whole science of Comparative Mythology.

The first thorough-going systematizer of traditional mythology according to a definite theory rigorously applied was Euhemerus of Messana in Sicily (cir. 300 B.C.). This daring innovator held that the gods were merely deified men and that the mythological narratives were transmuted history.

Euhemerus has had comparatively few followers among the scientific mythologists of modern times. Grote, who explains mythology by reference to "the unbounded tendency of the Homeric

Greeks to multiply fictitious persons, and to construe the phaenomena which interested them into manifestations of design," [53] had no difficulty in exposing the extravagances and fictions of Euhemerus and the uncritical methods of the Church Fathers who followed him. What Grote and other mythologists of the modern school did not do was to discern the residuum of truth in the doctrine of Euhemerus. Emphasize, as much as one may, the operation of the personifying tendency; explain all that can be explained by false etymology, naturistic personification or folk-lore, room must always be found for the tendency, as spontaneous and universal as any other in ancient and modern paganism, to deify human beings. This is a *vera causa* of mythology. In some cases already cited and in others, the process of myth-spinning through deification can actually be observed *in actu.* As Sir Alfred Lyall says: [54] "It is a fact that men are incessantly converting other men into gods, or embodiments of gods, or emanations from the Divine Spirit, all over Asia, and that out of the deified man *is visibly spun the whole myth which envelops him as a silk-worm in its cocoon.*" (Italics mine.) In mythologies

[53] *History of Greece* (Am. Ed.), Vol. 1, p. 342—see entire chapter.

[54] *Asiatic Studies,* London, 1882, p. 35; *cf.* whole chapter (2) and the same writer's *Rede Lecture,* p. 26f.

everywhere deification undoubtedly plays an important part and must be taken into consideration in any adequate theory as to their origin. The entire body of data presented in this discussion may be urged in support of this particular contention, but the following group of items, otherwise somewhat miscellaneous and unrelated, is particularly pertinent. The Nusairiyeh of Northern Syria, a sub-division of the Shiites, have deified Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed, and other heretical Moslems have done the same with Mohammed himself.[55] It is a particularly interesting fact that Ali is identified with one or another of the heavenly bodies, constituting a recognizable fusion of naturism and deification. I am convinced that this has happened oftener than we have been wont to think. According to the same authority the Druses deify Hakim Ibn Allah, while the natives around Mt. Carmel deify, of all persons, Elijah, the stern monotheistic prophet of Israel. Elijah is the god Khuddr.[56]

Hopkins says of the Jains of India: "Their only real gods are their chiefs or teachers whose idols are worshiped in the temples. . . . They have given up God to worship man." [57]

[55] Curtiss: *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day* (N. Y., 1902), pp. 103, 104.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[57] *Religions of India* (Boston, 1898), p. 295, n. 2.

In Buddhism, Gautama, the Agnostic, is deified. As Fairbairn says: "Buddhism deifies the *denier* of the divine." [58] A large part of the vast Buddhist mythology grows out of this primary deification which turned Buddhism from a philosophy into a religion. In China [59] the same fate overtook Confucius, whose negative attitude toward the spiritual world is well known.

The comparatively modern systems of Babism and its more recent supersessive form of Bahaism in Persia involve deification as their central and fundamental principle.[60]

The significance of these incidents is not only that they are undoubted cases of deification but that these deifications are accompanied or followed by mythologies more or less extensive, of which the deified person and his deeds form the substance. The statement is therefore justified that paganism even where it consists of decadent monotheism universally and spontaneously produces deification.[61]

[58] *Phil. Christian Religion,* pp. 243, 274f., *cf.* Monier-Williams *Buddhism* (N. Y., 1889), Lecture VIII.

[59] Legge, the greatest authority on the subject, holds that Confucius was actually worshiped in China,—*cf.* Underwood: *Religions of Eastern Asia,* pp. 159f. For qualification of this view consult Knox: *Development of Religion in Japan,* p. 173; Martin: *Lore of Cathay* (N. Y., 1901), pp. 246f.

[60] Speer: *Missions and Modern History,* Vol. 1, pp. 119f.—esp. 131, n. 4. Wilson: *Bahaism and Its Claims* (N. Y., 1915), pp. 35f. with references.

[61] For deification among Ancient Celts consult MacCulloch:

3. Deification Native to the Roman Genius

When, therefore, we come to the Romans the presumption is that they also will show the same tendency to deify men of eminence and power which is so generally seen elsewhere. Hirschfeld [62] calls the worship of the Roman Emperor and the royal house: "Eine durchaus un-Römische auf griechisch - orientalischen Boden gewachsene Pflanze, die aber gleichzeitig mit der neuen Monarchie nach dem Westen übertragen dort auffallend rasch sich acclimatisirt, tiefe Würzeln geschlagen und eigenartige Blüthen getrieben hat."

In this judgment I cannot concur. It is, of course, somewhat difficult to say just exactly what is and what is not strictly Roman,[63] since Roman

Religion of Ancient Celts (Edin., 1911), pp. 161f; Rhys: *Hibbert Lectures,* 1886 (3d ed., London, 98), Lecture VI. Those who wish to broaden the induction still further will find abundance of material: E.g., De La Saussaye: *Science of Religion,* Ch. XIV; Jevons: *Intr. to History of Religions,* pp. 275f.; W. Robertson Smith: *The Religion of the Semites,* pp. 42f; Frazer: *Golden Bough,* Part I, Vol. ii, Ch. XIV and index *sub. voc.* There is a vast amount of data bearing on the subject of divine kings in this colossal work, but much of the material needs careful critical sifting; e.g., what Dr. Frazer says of the Latin kings is based upon passages which are both late and decidedly secondary, while the bridge of inference by which he reaches antiquity seems to me precarious and unsteady. *Cf.* Fowler: R. E. R. P., p. 20: J. B. Carter: *Ency. Religion and Ethics,* Vol. I, p. 464, col. 2.

[62] *Op. Cit.,* p. 833.

[63] Fowler: *R. F.,* p. 19, starts out with the year 46 B.C., "the last year of the pre-Julian calendar," as affording a firm basis

tradition and culture were from the start dominated by Greek influence, and the back-flow from Asia through Greece began so early. It is also obvious that the deification of Roman emperors began only when there were emperors to deify. It is also probable, though by no means demonstrated, that the worship of *living* emperors, as distinguished from the *divi,* or deceased emperors deified, began in the Asiatic provinces.

Nevertheless, I venture to dispute the dictum that the worship of the ruler was a thoroughly un-Roman growth, introduced from the Hellenized Orient and merely domesticated among the Romans.[64] In the first place, it would be difficult to explain the rapid development and the ultimate magnitude of this system among the Romans were there not something in it inherently congenial to Roman thought and temper. We are not to forget, in this connection, what will be brought out in detail later, that nowhere in all antiquity did the

for the study of Roman religion while it was still Roman. By common consent the Fasti of the original calendar, preserved through the successive modifications which have been made in it, afford trustworthy knowledge of the religion of the early Romans (*ibid.,* p. 20).

[64] Fowler in his great work on *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* gives small place to Emperor-Worship (see pp. 437-8), on the ground that in its *developed form,* it belongs neither to Rome nor Italy. Technically, he is correct, but I think he underestimates its importance within the period with which he deals; *cf.* Heinen, *op. cit.,* under J. Cæsar and Augustus.

ruler-cult reach such power or attain so complete an organization, inner and outer, as among the Romans. All other studies of this cult are merely introductory and auxiliary to the supreme historic example of organized and systematic deification afforded by the Roman system. In this sense the cult is characteristically Roman.

In the second place, there is a sufficiency of positive evidence to show that the process of deifying men and of uniting gods and men in common life was as nearly native as anything Roman ever was. I adduce, first, the Trojan cycle, the presentation of which, in one way or another, forms the staple of Roman literature from beginning to end. The traditional founder of the Roman race was the son of Anchises and Venus Aphrodite. Æneas, therefore, was himself a demi-god, a divine-human being who is the reputed ancestor of a great Roman family, the Iulii. It is a fact, the significance of which can hardly be over-estimated, that Julius Cæsar traced his lineage to the gods.[65] My point here is that at the time when the Roman tradition was amalgamated with

[65] See next section. I need hardly urge that the Hercules cycle and the hero-stories in general were part and parcel of the Roman literary tradition. Hercules, who was probably the first foreign deity to arrive at Rome antedated by several centuries the beginnings of Roman literature. For the transformation of Æneas and others into gods, etc., see Ovid: *Metam.*, Bk. XIV, ll. 512-771.

the early Greek, not absolutely primitive times so far as the Romans are concerned, but still very early, the tendency which expresses itself in deification was already in active operation. The impulse to claim kinship with the gods, to cross in one direction or the other the line which separates gods and men, was in the Roman blood as inheritors of the ancient Greek tradition.

But, I think that we are undoubtedly justified in going much further back toward primitive times than this. In fact, I am convinced that the imperial-cult was rooted in the earliest stratum of Roman religion and was fostered by several of the strongest native tendencies of the Roman mind. I shall try to justify this assertion. Among the earliest beings worshiped by the Romans, even in the period when their gods were dimly defined *numina,* deified powers, functions or actions of nature and life, mostly unnamed and having no marked features of individuality, were the Di Manes,[66] or *"divi parentum"* of the Libri

[66] That the cult of the Dead involved actual deification is capable of very curious illustrations. Pliny expresses in a well-known passage (H. N., VII, 188) his scornful dislike of the Manes-cult and in the course of his remarks makes use of this expression: "sensum inferis dando et Manis colendo *deumque faciendo qui iam etiam homo esse desierit.*" In a very different spirit but with the same underlying idea of what the practice involves Cicero approaches the subject of a proposed memorial to his beloved daughter Tullia. He says to Atticus (ad Atticum, XII, 36): "Fanum" (a word signifying a temple designed for the worship of a god) fieri volo, neque hoc mihi

Pontificum,[67] the deified ancestors of the family; the Genius patris familias, which, in early times, has been described as masculinity raised to godhead, in the same sense as the deities of the household; the Lar compitalis (afterward Lar familiaris) or Genius of the common land of the community.[68] Here within the cult itself, coming down from the earliest times, is the entire machinery of deification which operates in the case of the emperors. Every regularly constituted family consisted of divine and human members and the line of demarkation between the groups was crossed at death. More than that, the idealization as an object of worship of the creative principle inherent in the pater-familias identified by the term

erui potest. Sepulcri similitudinem effugere non tam propter poenam legis studeo quam ut *quam* maxime adsequar *ἀποθέωσιν*. He wishes so to place this sanctuary and so to build it that "so long as Rome endures 'illud quasi consecratum remanere possit.'" *Ibid.*, XII:19. His whole idea is that Tullia is a living and glorified being as he plainly states in a fragment of his lost Consolatio: "Te omnium optimam doctissimamque, approbantibus dis immortalibus ipsis, in eorum coetu locatam, ad opinionem omnium mortalium consecrabo" (See Fowler: *R. E. R. P.*, p. 388.) An idea of the extent of the Manes-cult is given by the number of inscriptions devoted to it, see C.I.L.X., p. 1133.

[67] See Teuffel—*Hist. Rom. Lit.*, Eng. tr., sec. 73. One of these laws reads thus: "Si parentem puer verberit, ast olle plorassit, puer divis parentum sacer esto." Wassner holds and offers convincing evidence for his thesis that hero-worship is a derivative of ancestor-worship,—see *De Heroum Apud Graecos Cultu*, esp. pp. 42, 43. The same scholar works out the conjunction of hero-worship with that of the gods.

[68] See Fowler: *R. E. R. P., sub voc.; cf.* Marquardt: Röm. Staats., iii, p. 199; Ovid: Fasti, v, 145; Pliny: H. N., II, 6:12.

"Genius" made him a quasi-divine being even in his lifetime. Moreover, the Lar compitalis [69] performed the same office in the next larger community occupying the land and receiving support from it that the Genius pater-familias performed in the family. This is evidently pantheistic and not polytheistic in the Greek sense of anthropomorphic and sharply individualized deities;[70] but it is no less evidently pantheism on the way to polytheism. It may be true, as Fowler maintains, that the Romans would never have personalized or individualized their divine beings without help from the Greeks and that without external influences the portentous system of imperial deification would never have developed. On the other hand, it seems to me beyond question that the living germ of this development was at hand among the Romans, awaiting only a touch of suggestion, a breath of Greek pollen, so to say, to awaken it to full life. Aust does not put it too strongly when he says that the man-cult of Greece and the Orient: "Fand zu Rom in dem Genien und Manen-cult eine gewichtige Stütze." [71] The parallel between the household *divi* and

[69] See Fowler: *R. E. R. P.*, pp. 157, 8.

[70] For the place of Lares compitales in the emperor-cult, see J. B. Carter: *Religious Life of Ancient Rome*, p. 69; *cf.* C. I. L. X., 816; Dio, LV, 8. 6-7.

[71] R. R., p. 95; *cf.* Horace: Odes IV, v; Ovid: Fasti V, 145: Epist. II, 1.15.

the imperatores *divi,* between the Genius of the pater-familias and the worshiped Genius of the emperor; between the community Lares and what Boissieu calls the "Lare suprême de la patrie" [72] is too striking to be merely accidental. It is not to be forgotten either that the beginnings of the imperial-cult under Augustus are significantly connected with an attempted revival of the ancient religion which brought into renewed prominence the worship of the Manes and Genii.[73] Into this revival the *Divi parentum* of the Julian house including the Divus Iulius and the Genius of the living representative of that house fitted only too well. It required but a slight addition to the ancient ritual and no violation of its provisions.[74] As Aust says, the elevation both of Julius and Augustus alike was due to the glorification of the Julian house of the past. "Die Gottes

[72] This fact is strikingly exhibited in the inscription. C.I.L. Vol. VI, 439 onwards. The first group, 439-455 is dedications to the imperial Lares. The next group closely associated with the former in place and time belongs to Augustus as "Filius Divi Iulii." The latter cleverly dove-tailed his family and himself into the revived worship of the ancient gods.

[73] For the elasticity of the conception of the Lares see Duruy: *Hist. of Rome,* Eng. tr., IV, p. 164. Duruy holds that the worship of the *Divus* was "wholly Roman," *ibid.* So also J. B. Carter: *Ancestor Worship,* in *Enc. Religion and Ethics,* Vol. I. pp. 461-466. See *Art.* (*ut supra*), II, 1.

The worship of the Lares, etc., was very persistent. The Codex Theodosianus (XVI.X.12) forbids any one, of any rank, to worship even in secret: "larem igne, mero genium, penates odore."

[74] See below, p. 78.

herrlichkeit der Vorfahren umstralte auch den Sohn und Enkel." [75] Other aspects of the development have roots in the remote past. Aust cites an inscription which he dates 238 B.C. which speaks of the Genius of the Roman People and also a shield with an inscription which on the face of it is ancient: "Genio urbis Romae sive mas sive femina." [76] Aust holds that this cult centred in the Genius of the Roman people was very little later "als verwandte Götter des Hauses."

There is another line of historic connection between ancient and modern Rome, not quite so significant but yet intensely interesting, which we may trace out.

The god Quirinus was worshiped on the hill which continued to bear his name from the earliest period of the city-state as is evidenced by the name-form and by his appearance in the calendar of Numa from which even the earliest Greek importations are absent. The exact connotation of Quirinus whether oak deity or what-not is uncertain and of minor importance.[77] What is germane to my purpose, however, is a rather striking and suggestive series of facts—the first being the an-

[75] *Mon. Ancyr.*, 2. 9. 15-28.

[76] *Op. cit.*, p. 137. Uncertainty as to the sex of the deities was characteristic of developing Roman polytheism in the early stages.

[77] Fowler: *Op. cit.*, p. 143 n. 60. Ovid gives the story of the deification of Romulus as Quirinus in *Metam.* Bk. XIV, 772-828.

tiquity of the worship of Quirinus as a part of the genuine Roman cult.

The second fact is that in the course of time Quirinus becomes identified with Mars. This blending or pantheistic identification is, as usual, the result of a clash of cults, one local, the other an exotic, in this case, from a wider field in Italy—and the attempt to save the local cult from being obscured and overthrown. It failed to work, for, as Fowler says: "Quirinus never became like Mars, an important property of the Roman people, but was speedily obscured and only revived by the *legend of late origin which identified him with Romulus.*" It is this last italicized remark with which I am particularly concerned. The identification of Romulus with Mars-Quirinus is not only interesting in itself but suggests another line opening out of the primitive past.

According to Preller, Romulus and Remus were the Lares of the "old town" on the Palatine. By others Romulus is looked upon as an eponym and the Romulus cycle of stories as a group of ætiological myths.[78] It matters little which view one takes as to the origin of the Romulus story,—he is undeniably the Roman race-hero, *par excellence*. The identification of Romulus with Mars

[78] Duruy, on the other hand, makes Romulus a *legendary hero*. See *Hist. Rome*, Eng. tr. i, p. 141.

is a striking instance of the strong tendency among the Romans to historicize their myths. To quote Fowler again: "The race-hero and the race-god have almost a mythical identity." [79] This tendency, which is almost strong enough to be called a prevailing trait, appears again and again as a formative factor in the deification process.[80] An example of this lies immediately at hand. In the year 45 B.C., just after the decisive battle of Munda in Spain, the Roman Senate erected a statue to Julius Cæsar in the temple of Mars-Quirinus-Romulus, inscribed "Deo Invicto." [81] From Mars to Cæsar through Romulus, a curious but quite characteristic blending of the mythological and the historical, there is a single, logical movement.

I adduce further, as particularly suggestive evidence in the same line, the case of M. Marius Gratidianus (cir. 85-84 B.C.), a cousin of the elder Cicero and a prætor. Of him Seneca [82] says: "M. Mario cui vicatim populus statuas posuerat, *cui ture ac vino supplicabat,*" etc. Here is an entirely spontaneous act of deification, as indicated by the bestowment of technically divine

[79] *R. F.*, p. 37, n. 3.

[80] See below, p. 113.

[81] This event gave rise to one of the bitterest of all the bitter remarks of Cicero—see *Ad Atticum,* 13:28 and *cf.* Sihler: C. of A., p. 368. It is to be noted that "Deus Invictus" is a title both of Hercules and Mithra. See below, p. 122.

[82] *De Ira,* III, 18. 1, *cf.* Cic. de Oratore I. 39.

honors, on the part of the populace, who proclaim and worship their leader (in this case, literally, an idol) while he is still alive. It was an entirely native impulse, just as distinctively Roman as anything else the Roman people ever did. No evidence of Asiatic influence is at hand and no suggestion reaches us that any outside influence was necessary. Any person who touched the popular imagination or kindled its emotions was likely to evoke that adulatory impulse which so readily passed among polytheists into the language and actions of worship.[83]

[83] This tendency may be seen even in Lucretius whose veneration for Epicurus is almost a religion—e.g., Bk. V, 8f.; "Dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi, qui princeps vitae rationem invenit," etc.

CHAPTER IV

THE RULER-CULT AND JULIUS CÆSAR

I. Cæsar and the Divi

I HAVE already touched upon the relationship of Julius Cæsar to the development of the ruler-cult. Dr. Wissowa holds[84] that since Cæsar did not actually reign as emperor he did not by right belong in the circle of the *divi,* but was brought in by the personal action and influence of Augustus. This is an academic judgment which I consider very nearly an absolute inversion of the facts. On the contrary, it is quite evident that Cæsar was not only the first of the *divi,* after Romulus who belonged to the distant and legendary past, but the actual founder of the new order in such a way that the entire cult rests upon him, the first well-known, unquestionably historic person upon whom was conferred the public and official title of *divus.*[85] In support of this conclusion, I adduce first, the numerous inscriptions which

[84] See H. K. A., Vol. IV, p. 71.
[85] See above, p. 45, for early use of *divus.*

refer to Augustus as the son of the deified Julius.[86] The earliest of these which I am able to date with certainty belongs to the year 11 B.C. and is dedicated to Augustus as the son of Julius Cæsar.[87]

It is important in other respects inasmuch as it shows the growing dynastic consciousness of the followers and admirers of Augustus and is given here entire as typical of these countless dedicatory inscriptions which are so important for an understanding of the history of the ruler-cult.[88] Many others of the same tenor, dated both before and after the death of Augustus, might be adduced. In other words, Julius Cæsar was looked upon as the first and determinative member of the new *divi*. From him even Augustus takes his title.

2. The Divine Ancestry of Cæsar

The reason for this primacy of Cæsar in the establishment of the order of the imperatores *divi*

[86] C. I. L., X (verified, the index list is incorrect), 404, 795, 805, 931, 3827, 4637, 4857, 5169, 6903, 6914, 6917, 7458, 8035; *cf.* Aust: R. R., p. 95; Heinen: Klio, 1911, Vol. II, p. 167; C. I. L., I, p. 50. S. I. G., I,[2], 558, n354 (this last may go back to 17 B.C.). These represent many localities of Italy.

[87] C. I. L., XII, 4333. The inscription belongs to Narbo in Gallia Narbonensis:

Numini Augusti Votum,
Caesaris Divi F(ilios) Augusto,
Coniugi liberis gentique,
Ad supplicandum Numini Eius.

[88] See below, p. 75.

to which, technically speaking, he did not belong, since he was never formally emperor, is based upon certain important facts in his career. First, we must not forget that he derived his ancestry from Ascanius Iulus, the son of Æneas, the grandson of Anchises and Venus Aphrodite. To Cæsar, therefore, the goddess was always Venus Genetrix, not merely in the general sense[89] but in a peculiarly intimate and personal sense. In the year of his triumph (44 B.C.) he dedicated in the beautiful Julian Forum a templum Veneris Genetricis, in honor of his ancestress. The effect of this idea regarding his divine ancestry upon the mind of Cæsar may be seen in the eulogy in honor of his deceased Aunt Julia, which he delivered long before the dedication of the temple, in 68-67 B.C. immediately after his entrance into the Senate. In that address he says: "Amitae meae Iuliae maternum genus ab regibus ortum, paternum cum diis immortalibus conjunctum est. Nam ab Anco Marcio sunt Marcii Reges, quo nomine fuit mater; a Venere Iulii, cuius gentis familia est nostra. Est ergo in genere et sanctitas regum, qui plurimum inter homines pollent, et caeremonia deorum, quorum ipsi in potestate sunt reges." [90] It would seem

[89] *Cf.* Lucretius: De Rerum Natura Bk. I, 1-24. Lucretius begins his poem with an invocation to Venus as "Genetrix Aeneadum."

[90] Suet. D. I., VI and LXXVI. See below, p. 81.

that to a man who could soberly make this claim, the forms or titles of imperial distinction could add very little.

3. Divine Honors of Cæsar During His Lifetime

Suetonius affirms [91] that many people thought that during his lifetime, Cæsar accepted excessive honors—"ampliora etiam humano fastigio decerni sibi passus est." He specifies "sedem auream in curia, et pro tribunali, tensam et ferculum circensi pompa, templa, aras, simulacra iuxta deos, pulvinar, flaminem, lupercos, appellationem mensis e suo nomine; ac nullos non honores ad libidinem cepit et dedit." This enumeration of honors includes an assigned position for his statue [92] among the gods both in processions [93] and in the temples. Mommsen bases his statement [94] as to Cæsar's personal attitude to his own divinity upon Sue-

[91] D. I., LXXVI. *Cf.* C. I. L., X, 1271, cut in very large and beautiful characters. It is addressed to M. Salvius: "Decurion by benefit of the god Cæsar." The inscription is from Nola and seems to belong to the dictatorship of Cæsar.

[92] Suetonius uses the word simulacrum which corresponds, of course, to the Greek ἄγαλμα, a statue designed for worship. Dio (44.4) uses the word ἀνδριας which does not necessarily mean a statue intended for worship.

[93] According to Suetonius, Cæsar had a *tensa,* or chariot, in which a divine image was carried in public processions. He specifies also *ferculus,* which is a litter for the same purpose.

[94] Staats., 2.2, p. 755.

tonius. The conclusion that Cæsar favored his own deification has been questioned, but it seems to me the evidence indicates that he went rather far. At any rate, epigraphic evidence for the deification of Cæsar at the time of his pro-consulship in Bithynia can be cited.[95] Hirschfeld maintains that the deification of proconsuls was a customary and accepted procedure. Pompey and Antony were so honored as well as Cæsar.[96] It is interesting to note, and may go down on the credit side of Cicero's career that he was offered honors like these and refused them, partly on the ground that they rightly belonged to the gods and the Roman people.[97] He says: "Ob haec beneficia quibus illi obstupescunt nullos honores mihi nisi verborum decerni sino: statuas, fana, τέθριππα,[98] prohibeo," etc.

[95] An Ephesian inscription (C. I. G. 2957) of the year 48-47 B.C. speaks of Cæsar in a way that is strongly reminiscent of Egypt and the Ptolemies as: τὸν Αρεως καὶ Ἀφροδείτης θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ καὶ κοινὸν τοῦ ἀνθρωπινου βιοῦ σωτῆρα. Of like tenor are C. I. G., 2369, 2214g, 2215, 2957 and C. I. A., III 428. Hirschfeld (*op. cit.*, p. 836, note 19) refutes the contention of Boeck, who is strangely reluctant to believe that anybody could accept divine honors for himself in his own life-time, that these inscriptions were not addressed to the living Cæsar. In 29 B.C. Cæsar was honored as a hero under the title of Men or Sabazios, an Anatolian deity at Nikaia. See Pliny, H. N., VIII, 155.

[96] See page 34 for case of Flamininus.

[97] Ad Atticum, 5.21.7; *cf.* Ad Quintum Fr., 1.1.26.

[98] Chariots for statues equivalent to *tensae.*

4. Cæsar as Divus

Upon the death of Cæsar, he was promptly voted both divine and human honors by the Senate. According to Suetonius [99] he was deified not merely by the mouth of those making a formal decree "sed in persuasione volgi." The games in celebration of his apotheosis were marked by celestial omens. "Stella crinita per septem continuos dies fulsit," which was believed to be the soul of Cæsar received into heaven.[100]

Dio's list [101] of posthumous divine honors bestowed upon Cæsar, which contains a rather portentous number of items, is very interesting. Out of the total which I have numbered from one to eleven, a few deserve special mention. His acts were made perpetually binding, the place and day of his assassination were both made accursed; his image was not to be carried at the funerals of his relatives *καθάπερ θεοῦ τινὸς ὡς ἀληθῶς* but was to be carried together with a special image of Venus at horse races; no one taking refuge in his shrine, which was formally set apart as to a god, could be banished or stripped of goods, *ὅπερ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲ τῶν θεῶν πλὴν τῶν ἐπὶ Ρομόλου γενομένων.*

[99] D. I., LXXXVIII.
[100] For Julian games *cf.* C. I. L., I, p. 293; *cf.* Beurlier: Culte, Sec. 55f.
[101] Bk. XLVII, 18, 19.

It is quite evident from Dio's presentation of the ceremonial and other official acts, which are typical of the whole scheme of deification on its mechanical side, that the process was carried out in strict accord with Roman customs and with the deliberate intention of making every item count.

The contention of Wissowa, already alluded to, is sufficiently disposed of by the fact that Cæsar was deified by the only authority capable of doing it, that is, the Roman Senate, and in the regular and accepted mode. It is also clear that in the dedication of a temple (45 B.C.) and the appointment of a priesthood to perform the rites belonging to the new cult, Augustus followed—but did not lead—the Senate and the Roman people in their acknowledgment of the divinity of the great Gaius. Augustus, however, was a devoted adherent of the new cult.

Velleius Paterculus (A.D. 30 *flor.*) in a very characteristic passage,[102] said of Augustus: "Sacravit parentem suum Caesar non imperio sed religione, non appellavit eum, sed fecit deum." This last clause should be interpreted by emphasis: "he not merely *called* him but *made* him god."

Valerius Maximus[103] ironically acknowledges the good offices of Cæsar's assassins in procuring

[102] 2.126.
[103] I.VI:13.V.M. wrote under Tiberius.

his exaltation. In an address to Cæsar in which he speaks of the divine honors, including altars, temples, priests and ritual which were bestowed upon him, he says finally: "erupit deinde eorum parracidium, qui, dum te hominum numero subtrahere volunt, deorum concilio adiecerunt." In this connection a poetic touch is given to the Cæsarean cult by the fact, which Plutarch records,[104] that Antony was pleased to be appointed a priest of Cæsar.

5. The Julian Cult

The extent and character of the Julian cult may be seen from a few selected inscriptions. A marble inscription[105] belonging to the pre-Augustan age (cir. 43 B.C.) now in the museum of the Vatican at Rome, reads:

Divo Iulio Iussu
Populi Romani
Statutum est Lege
Rufrena

[104] Antony, 33. The words are worth recording: Αὐτος δε Καίσαρι χαριζόμενος ιὲρεὺς ἀπεδείχθη τοῦ πρότερου Καίσαρος. Cicero (2d Phil. 43.110) points the finger of scorn at Antony for his delay in playing the rôle of Julian priest: "Et tu in Caesaris memoria diligens? tu illum amas mortuum? quem is majorem honorem consecutus erat, quam ut haberet pulvinar, simulacrum, fastigium, flaminem? Est ergo, flamen, ut Iovi, ut Marti, ut Quirino sic divo Iulio M. Antonius? Quid igitur cessas?" etc. In the same connection Cicero expresses his dislike of the whole proceeding.

[105] C. I. L., IX, 2628.

Another most suggestive inscription[106] comes from Æsernia:

Genio[107] Deivi Iuli
Parentis Patriae
Quem Senatus
Populusque
Romanus in
Deorum Numerum
Rettulit[108]

A rather startling inscription comes from Athens, which specifically calls Cæsar, god.[109]

The extent of the cult may be inferred from the fact that in a group of three inscriptions recording flamens or sacerdotes of Cæsar, one is from Terventum of Regio 4 in Rome,[110] one from Reii[111] in Narbonensian Gaul, and one from Rusicade[112] in Numidia.

[106] C. I. L., I, 626.

[107] On the the use of *genio* in this inscription see below, page 68.

[108] Particular attention should be called to this word. It signifies that Cæsar belongs inherently to the company of the gods, to which he is restored at death. *Cf.* Velleius Paterculus, 2.124 "post redditum caelo patrem et corpus eius humanis honoribus, numen divinis honoratum," etc. (Written under Tiberius.) The reference in *"patrem,"* etc., is, of course, to Augustus. The word *"Numen"* is used exactly as in ordinary references to the gods). And see below, p. 100.

[109] C. I. A., 65 *ὑπὸ Γαιου Ἰουλίου Καίσαρος θεοῦ.*

[110] C. I. L., IX, 2598.

[111] C. I. L., XII, 370.

[112] C. I. L., VIII, 7986.

Taken all in all, the imperial cult is in full swing upon the death of Julius Cæsar and the accession of Augustus.

6. The Worship of Roma

At this point, I am compelled to go somewhat aside for the purpose of taking up a very important unattached thread in this development. I refer to the Roma-cult, which is closely united with the ruler-cult, and formed a sort of intermediate link between the new personalism and the old Olympian system of personified nature-powers.

The glorification of Rome under the title of the goddess Roma, began, according to Hirschfeld,[113] immediately after the entrance of the Romans into Asiatic affairs. According to their own claim, this cult was founded by the City of Smyrna, whose inhabitants boasted that "when Carthage yet stood and mighty kings ruled in Asia," [114] they had erected the first temple to Roma. Hirschfeld points out that Rome had thus become the tutelary goddess of Smyrna.

This side-development is especially important because it exhibits the elasticity of the polytheistic creed which was continually expanding to admit

[113] *Op. cit.*, p. 835.
[114] Tacitus: *Annales*, 4:56.

new members and also the operation of the political factor which contributed so largely to the advancement of the emperors to the position of divine preëminence. The Roma-cult is interlocked from the beginning with the imperial. There were temples of Dea Roma and Divus Iulius for Roman citizens at Ephesus and Nicæa and probably elsewhere. The worship of Roma was connected with that of the Augusti almost universally.[115]

[115] See *C. I. G.*, 3524, 2696, 2943, 478 (Roma and Aug. in four cities incl. Athens), and below, pp. 71f. On the Roma-cult in general, consult Wissowa, *H. K. A.*, p. 283 and Preller: *Röm. Myth.*, pp. 283f.

CHAPTER V

THE RULER-CULT IN THE REIGN OF AUGUSTUS

1. Life-Time Worship of the Emperors

WE are now fairly embarked upon the imperial era, which I have divided into two sections, about equally balanced in importance; the era of Augustus, and that of the successors of Augustus. The Augustan age itself stands out as the period during which the imperial cult was organized, established, endowed with institutional machinery and generally put on a permanent and self-perpetuating basis.

The question which occupies first place in all critical discussions of the emperor cult among the Romans is this: Were the emperors worshiped by the Romans of Italy during their life-times or only after death? That they received divine honors in the Eastern provinces while still alive is abundantly proved.

The other point, which is of the utmost importance for an understanding of the relationship of the cult to the history of Roman religion, is still

sub judice. We may as well take up the matter now.

Let us begin with Tacitus. This historian says [116] that he found in the records of the Senate an entry showing that a certain Cerealis Anicius moved the erection of a temple *Neroni Divo,* on the ground that Nero had attained to more than human power. This honor though unusual was refused solely because the action was thought to be ominous of the emperor's death,—"nam," says Tacitus, "deum honor principi non ante habetur, quam agere inter homines desierit." The question at once arises whether this rule, as Tacitus states it, was kept. Formally, by the Senate, perhaps it was, but actually it was not. Take, for example, the pæan sung to Nero himself *at Rome* on the occasion of his triumph, A.D. 68. He was called: "Olympian Victor, Pythian Victor, Augustus, Hercules, Apollo," etc. He was also acclaimed: "Our National Victor, the only one from the beginning of time" and "Augustus, Augustus, Divine Voice, Blessed are they that hear thee!" [117] This represents and expresses the flattery of an excited and servile populace, and there are not wanting indications that the enthusiasm was officially and artificially stimulated, but the point is that public adu-

[116] *Annales,* 15:74.
[117] Dio, 63.20.3.

lation so constantly takes the form of deification.[118] Wissowa [119] flatly affirms that Augustus was worshiped as god during his life-time, both in the East and in the West. From that time on, he holds, until Diocletian, the rule was, the *divus* received divine honors together with the Genius of the living emperor which included the adoration of the imperial statue. This statue cult was combined with the worship of the Lares.[120]

As a matter of fact, the worship of the Genius, or hypostatized spirit or divine *alter ego,* of the emperor was a very frail barrier indeed against personal worship—it could scarcely be called more than a convention—while the adoration of the imperial statue became a system of down-right idolatry. Moreover, the rules, whatever they may have been, were broken absolutely in the instances of Caligula and Domitian.[121]

Hirschfeld holds [122] that Augustus, in his life-time, received divine honors throughout the empire, but that the cult was not so systematic or well

[118] Dio says (63.2, 5) that Tiridates offered victims before the altar of Nero and addressed him as "Dominus"—Δεσπότης—and also as Mithra.

[119] *Op. cit.,* p. 72.

[120] C. I. L., VI, 307. Sergius Megalensis is spoken of as Cultor Larum et Imaginum Augusti. Under date 56 A.D. (Fynes-Clinton) we have an entry which identifies the Augustales "qui Neroni C.C. Augusto et Agrippinae Aug. . . . et genio coloniae ludos fecerunt."

[121] See below, pp. 94ff.

[122] *Op. cit.,* p. 838.

organized in the West, as shown by the scattered epigraphic remains.[123] Döllinger[124] maintains that until Caligula it was understood at Rome that the emperor by a special decree of the Senate and the successor should be raised to godhood as *divus*. This process was analogous to the cult of the Manes.[125] The same acute student points out two striking facts: (a) that divine honors were pressed upon the emperors, rather than sought by them,[126] and (b) that the *divus* became a new god added to the pantheon, whereas the living

[123] Heinen (p. 175, see bibliography) gives the following list of inscriptions as indicating the priests, altars and temples of the living Augustus in Italy: C.I.L., V, 18,[1] 3341,[2] 4442,[3] IX, 1556;[4] X, 816,[5] 820,[6] 837,[7] 1613,[8] 5169,[9] 6305;[10] XI, 1331,[11] 1420,[12] 1421,[13] 1922,[14] 1923,[15] 3303;[16] XIV, 73[17] 353[18] 2964.[19] Of these identifications of date 1, 3, 8, 12, 13, 17 seem probable but uncertain; 16 seems obviously incorrect; 11 belongs to the age of Nero but speaks of an Augustan priesthood which by inference H. carries back to Augustus; 19 depends upon a reading questioned by Mommsen; the remaining references are beyond question. Throwing away those which are doubtful we have ten contemporaneous inscriptions from Italy.

[124] H. J., p. 615.

[125] Manes—see P. W., *sub. voc.* and above, pp. 45, 47. Dill (Roman Society, etc., N. Y., 1911, pp. 615f) asserts that the belief in the deity of the emperors "was long a fluctuating and hesitating creed." The evidence which he offers for this hesitancy concerns the attitude of the emperors toward their own deification (see below, pp. 94ff). On the side of the people there was no hesitation at all, or, if there was, this attitude was confined to a very few who gave no sign of their secret feeling. Dill is at least verbally correct in saying that Domitian was the first emperor who *claimed* the double title "Dominus et Deus" (*cf.* p. 98).

[126] H. J., p. 613. See Tac. *Annales,* 4:37. Nero and Domitian as well as Caligula must be excepted.

emperor was looked upon as the incarnation—or more strictly, the reappearance of some well-known deity, as Dionysus, Ares, Zeus, etc.[127]

Looking at the whole body of evidence, it seems clear that the facts are not homogeneous. It is evidently vain to look for consistency in a process which has so many cross-currents of emotion and self-interest.[128]

The spontaneous and popular character of the emperor-worship, and something of its psychology, I think, can be seen in an instance given by Suetonius.[129] Sailors and passengers of an Alexandrian ship in the bay of Puteoli, when Augustus arrived there "candidati coronatique et tura libantes fausta omina et eximias laudes congesserant." In their address to the emperor, they said that "per illum se vivere, per illum navigare, libertate atque fortunis per illum frui." How easily the language of flattery passes into that of actual worship and how readily the preëminence of the emperor merges into that of the deity as a mountain-top melts into the blue of the sky!

[127] *Op. cit.*, p. 616. As an interesting side-light upon this tendency to look for the embodiment of the gods, the incident of Acts 14:12 should be noted.

[128] As examples of inconsistency, the use of *divus* in connection with Titus in the oath formula (see below, p. 100), and the combination of Genius and *divus* in the inscription cited on p. 61, n. 107.

[129] Aug. 98.

2. The Worship of Augustus and the Augustan Cult

The worship of Augustus (B.C. 31-A.D. 14) apparently began at Pergamos, where the emperor cult was united with the worship of Roma and grafted immediately into the already established cult of the Attalidæ. The foundation of the whole system as afterward developed was thus laid in the year 29 B.C.[130] According to Mommsen,[131] when Augustus permitted divine honors to be offered him by the Diets of Asia and Bithynia "there was blended for the first time the celebration of the festival for the reigning emperor and the imperial system in general." The machinery of the cult was very complete and elaborate from the start. The whole system of worship was imperialized just as it stood. The Senate established the Augustalia or Augustan celebrations.[132] This institution spread through the empire with great rapidity.[133]

[130] It is to be remembered that the title "Augustus," which had previously been confined to the gods, was bestowed upon Octavian two years before—B.C. 27, *Mon. Ancyr.* 1. 18. 25.

[131] Römische Gesch. Band V, Kap. VIII, p. 318.

[132] Monumentum Ancyranum, 6:13, under date of Oct. 12, 735, U. C., 18 B.C.

[133] Tacitus: *Ann.*, 4. 15, of the year 23 B.C. The historian says: "Effigiem apud Forum Augusti publica pecunia patres decrevere."

In furtherance of the scheme, Augustales [134] were appointed after the model of the Mercuriales. Sodales and cultores, who apparently were drawn from civil life to further the cult, were appointed in various localities.

The provincial high priests [135] of Augustus became the eponyms for the year and the chief functionaries of their provinces. These men bore the expenses of the annual festivals and since many honors and privileges were connected with the position there was keen rivalry among distinguished and ambitious men for it. They were named according to the province, Asiarch, Bithyniarch,[136] etc. The dignity of these various permanent and temporary priestly functionaries [137] in connection with the cult of Augustus, and indi-

[134] For mention of Augustales, C. I. L., X, 977, 994, 1026, 1034, 1066. As early as A.D. 38-41 an Augustalis is found at Avaricum in Britain. See *Revue Archéol,* Dec., 1879.

[135] The first High-priest of Augustus was said to have been appointed to a temple on the Island of Salamis built by Augustus himself, see C. I. A., III, 728. We find inscriptions for Cæsarea or Imperial temples from Augustus to Alexander Severus, C. I. L., IX, 1556, Or.-Hen., 961, 2508, 2509.

[136] C. I. G., 3487. The Municipal priests appear on the coins of thirteen Doric towns—see Mionnet: *Description,* etc., iii, 61. 1. C. I. L., XIV, p. 367, col. 2. Mommsen: *Staatsrecht,* II^3, sec. 258f.

[137] There seems to be no absolutely fixed nomenclature for the priests of Augustus. I have compared a large number of inscriptions and have been unable to formulate any distinctions in the use of flamen, sacerdos, or pontifex. The provincial high-priest stood by himself. The titles, Augustales, cultores, etc., seem to have been used without any sharp distinction.

rectly the sweep and power of the cult itself, may be inferred from the statement of Tacitus [138] that these new religious rites were established and a new line of priests added to the sacerdotal college, which was made up primarily of twenty-one eminent citizens drawn by lot, to whom were added Tiberius, Drusus, Claudius and Germanicus.[139]

The spread of the movement to glorify Augustus which seems to have swept both Italy and the Provinces may also be inferred from another statement made by Tacitus,[140] who says with respect to a temple dedicated to Augustus at Tarraco: "Petentibus Hispanis permissum, datumque in omnes provincias exemplum."

The first altar to Augustus, with Roma,[141] was dedicated by Drusus at Lugdunum in Gaul, in the year 12 B.C.[142] Of the year 11 we have the famous and significant inscription from the forum at Narbo.[143] About the same date, from Baetica [144] comes an inscription equally significant of what is to come: It is addressed to one Lucretius

[138] *Annales,* 1.54.

[139] Acro on Hor. Sat., II, 3.281 says: "Erant autem libertini sacerdotes qui Augustales dicebantur."

[140] *Annales,* 1.78.

[141] See below, p. 90.

[142] Mommsen: *Röm. Gesch.* Band V, pp. 85, 89. Boissieu: *Inscript. de Lyon,* p. 609. C. I. L., II, 4248. In this same year there was a Magister Augustalis in Etruria, C. I. L., XI, 3200.

[143] See p. 54, n. 87.

[144] C. I. L., II, 1663.

Fulvianus, who is "Pontifex Perpetuus Domus Augustae," and to Lucretia, who is Flaminica perpetua, etc. From Scardona [145] we have a dedication:

Sacerdoti ad Aram Augusti,

From Præneste comes a fragment which speaks of Cn. Pompeius Rusticus as "Flamen Caearis Augusti." At Nysa, presumably belonging to the temple of Roma and Augustus in that place,[146] there is an inscription Ιερέως Ρώμης αὐτοκράτορος Σεβσάτου which establishes the fact that the year was named from the priest of Roma and Augustus. An important inscription [147] from Auctarium in Gallia Narbonensis, furnishes the regulations governing the feasts of Augustus. Another type of inscription, most significant as indicating the general trend, passes from the combination of Augustus with other gods to the mention of Augustus alone.[148] The tendency of the imperial cult to supersede the Olympian, and to throw the older

[145] C. I. L., III, 2810.
[146] So Boeck—n. C. I. G., 2943.
[147] C. I. L., XII, 6038.
[148] C. I. L., X, 885-890. a. 885-887, Mercury and Maia; b. 888, Augustus, Mercury and Maia; c. 890, Augustus alone.
Cf. also C. I. L., XIV, 3679, where also we find a combination of the gods with Augustus, then Augustus. The second column of this inscription combines Augustus with others. See also C. I. L., VIII, 6339, from Numidia, which unites Aug. with Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

deities into the shadow began in the reign of Augustus.

I have made no attempt to fix with exactness the dates of all these Augustan inscriptions to determine in each instance whether or not it precedes or follows his decease and formal deification. It is of no vital importance, as inscriptions of all the leading types belong in both periods. His death made little difference, as his deification was already practically accomplished and the post mortem celebration was merely formal.[149]

Suetonius naïvely discloses the general attitude in this matter when he ascribes to Augustus himself the curious notion that his punctilio with regard to paying his gambling debts would redound to his ultimate glorification: "Sed hoc malo; benignitas enim mea me ad coelestem gloriam efferet."[150]

[149] Dio (51.20) gives an account of the honors decreed to Augustus in the year 29 B.C. Among other things it was decreed, *ἕς τε ὕμνους αὐτὸν ἐξ ἴσου τοῖς θεοῖς ἐσγράφεσθαι καὶ φυλὴν Ἰουλίον ἐπ αυτοῦ ἐπανομαζεσθαι*, etc. The honors included a crown in all processions, senators in purple-bordered togas, a perpetually consecrated day and, particularly the following, *ἱερέας τὲ ἀυτὸν καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὅσους ἂν ἀὲι ἐθελησῃ αἱρεἰσθαι προσκατεστήσαντο*. Two items in this account are particularly worthy of note. First, the naming of the Julian family; and second, the enlarged list of imperial priests. Dio goes on to say that the custom then established was kept up until in his day the number of priests was boundless.

[150] Divus Aug. 71, *cf. ibid.*, 97.

Suetonius also says[151] that a limit was set to the posthumous honors paid to Augustus but it is not easy to see where the line was drawn inasmuch as the usual rites were conducted with great elaboration, "nec defuit vir praetorius, qui se effigiem cremati euntem in caelum vidisse juraret."

[151] D. A., 100.

CHAPTER VI

THE RULER-CULT UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF AUGUSTUS

1. The Cult of the Augusti

IN reviewing the history of the emperor-cult as a whole, from the time of Augustus on—under his successors—the most striking single feature is the development of the cult of the Augusti. By this process, which grew out of the general organism of imperial deification as fecundated by the dynastic idea, the emperors together with members of the royal family and even of the imperial entourage were formed into a Roman Olympus—that is, an organized hierarchy of accepted deities.[152] Certain stages in this unique development are clearly discernible. The first step is disclosed in an inscription already referred to more than once,[153] in which with Augustus, his

[152] In a coin of Sardis (see Eckhel D. N. A., VI, p. 211). Drusus and Germanicus are called *νεοὶ θεοί*. Eckhel caustically says: "Vocantur (*ν. θ.*), istud fane pro Graecorum genio, qui Olympum colonis implevere." He also strongly affirms that these coins in honor of the adopted sons of Tiberius were made when the young princes were still alive.

[153] C. I. L., XII, 4333.

wife, his children and his race, are combined. Other inscriptions refer to Livia, the wife of Augustus, under the divine title Ὑγεία,[154] and Julia.[155]

Other women of the imperial house were also honored as goddesses.[156]

Far more important, however, than this tendency to include wives, relatives, and favorites, within the divine nimbus of the emperor, was the self-perpetuating character of the organization which had been built up for the purpose of advancing the interests of the cult.[157]

[154] C. I. A., III, 460.

[155] C. I. L., XII, 1363, 4249. Flaminicae Iuliae Augustae. C. I. L., II, 2038, Iuliae Augustae
Matri Ti. Caesaris Aug. Prin.

[156] *Cf.* C. I. A., III, 315, 316. In these inscriptions the Delian Priest of Apollo, of Cæsar Augustus, High Priest of Antonia Augusta, the priestess of the goddess Antonia, the priestess of Vesta, Livia and Julia are mentioned. It has been hinted that Livia herself was called Vesta—see note *ut supra.*

Julia, the wife of Agrippa, is called Aphrodite Geneteira at Eresos in Asia Minor (23-1 B.C.).

Tiberius and his mother Livia were worshiped as divine mother and son at Tiberiopolis in Phrygia (see Ramsay: *Hist. Geog. Asia Minor,* p. 147); Agrippina was called θεὰ Διόλις Καρποφόρος at Lesbos; Poppaea Sabina was honored at Akmonia as the goddess of "Imperial Fertility" (Σεβαστη Εὐβοσία). See C. I. G., 3858.

[157] In the Narbo inscription of 11 B.C., referred to elsewhere (see p. 54), occurs the expression: "Qui se numini eius imperpetuum colendo obligaverunt." It is no exaggeration to say that the system was intended to be permanent, and as human institutions go, was permanent—it lasted nearly as long as the Empire.

The scope and effectiveness of the post-Augustan organization may be seen from the following facts in Asia Minor. Ramsay (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*) shows that the

For example, in the time of Claudius (41-54 A.D.) there are Augustales Claudiales.[158] Again, the Seviri, which were originally the six highest priests of Augustus, were perpetuated through successive reigns, thus: Seviri Tiberiani[159] Claudiales[160] Neronieni,[161] Flaviales.[162] In the last title the dynastic tendency is in full bloom. It was Domitian who established a temple to the Flavian family,[163] and it is to this era that the form of oath to be taken by a prætor left in charge during the absence of a duum vir, which includes the emperors among the gods, belongs. The oath runs thus,[164] "per Iovem et divom Augustum et divom

provincial and municipal organization was practically complete. There were foundations of the imperial cult certainly in many, probably in all, the cities of Asia Minor. Whole provinces united in establishing foundations, and these Κοινά held festivals in the principalities. Among the cities mentioned in this connection are those to whom the Epistles of the Apoc. were written (*op. cit.*, p. 55). Under Caracalla and Commodus cities competed for the title "Νεόκορος," which was bestowed upon those which built a temple dedicated solely to an emperor. The imperial cult adopted and adapted the existent religious ministrants such as *hymnodoi, theologoi,* etc., in such a way as practically to confiscate the existing temple-foundations. Add to that the accompanying assumption of the functions and dignities of the established deities, and the taking over process seems quite complete. The festival of Zeus at Laodicea became the feast of Zeus and the Emperors before A.D. 150 (*ibid.*, pp. 11f).

[158] See P. W., II, 2355.
[159] C. I. L., IX, 6415.
[160] C. I. L., XI, 714.
[161] C. I. L., V, 3429.
[162] C. I. L., V, 4399, XI², 4639; XII, 1159.
[163] Suet.: Dom. V.
[164] C. I. L., II, 1963, and 4.

Claudium et divom Vespasianum et divum Titum Augustum et genium Caesaris Domitiani Augusti deosque penates."

In the acts of the Arval brothers,[165] an entry for the year 69 A.D. which prescribes the mode of sacrifice on stated occasions (Feb. and March) reads:

Iovi (bull)
Iunono (heifer)
Saluti Rom. Pop. (heifer)
Divo Augusto (bull)
Divae Augustae (heifer)
Divo Claudio (bull)

On March first, and again on the ninth, the emperor offered sacrifice as this canon called for, and in addition offered a bull "Genio Ipsius."

Just when the term Augusti was first applied as a collective designation for the *divi*, their living successor, relations and satellites looked upon as "a fast-closed group of new deities" [166] I have been unable to determine. The inscriptions are so numerous, so widespread, and so nearly contemporaneous that it becomes difficult, if not impossible,

[165] Henzen: *Acta Arvalia*, year 69 A.D. Under date A.D. 183 the festival of the Arval Brothers was held in which the old ritual was gone through with the addition of sixteen *divi* (*ibid.*). The "Carmen Saliorum" was also addressed to the living emperors, see Wordsworth Fragmenta *sub voc.* Marquardt: *Röm. Staats.*, iii, pp. 427-438.

[166] Wissowa: *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

to determine dates. I am convinced, however, that the epigraphic evidence will lead us back within a reign or two of Augustus himself. On the other hand, there are designated high-priests of the Augusti in a group of inscriptions in and about Athens which come down as late as 143 A.D.[167] (Antoninus Pius). No worship, therefore, is more characteristic of the imperial age as a whole than this veneration of the Augusti. This becomes the more evident when we consider another related fact, already hinted at, that these new deities exhibited a tendency to supersede the established and traditional Olympian gods. To exhibit this tendency in full bloom it is necessary only to refer to a group of inscriptions discovered in Asia Minor by the Wolfe expedition of 1884-5.[168] I give a translation of a Greek inscription [169] from Kara Baulo, on the western edge of Zengi Ovasü:

> "The Council and the People
> Honored Councilor Bianor son of
> Antiochus,
> City-lover, gymnasiarch
> High-priest of the Augusti
> Founder of the City."

[167] C. I. A., III, 57, 389, 665, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 675a.
[168] Published by the Archæological Institute of America in 1888 as Studies of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, vol. iii. Written by J. R. Sitlington-Sterrett, Ph.D. The numbers refer to this volume.
[169] No. 403, see *op. cit.*, p. 284, also *cf.* 282.

Another inscription [170] taken from the Temple of the Augusti and Aphrodite (who is ignored in the inscription, as she takes second place in the title of the temple) is dedicated by Antiochus, the Son of Tlamoos, designated as ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν Σεβαστῶν, to θεοῖς Σεβαστοῖς καὶ τῇ πατρίδι. His wife is designated in the same way as high-priestess. Another inscription [171] from the Temple of the Emperors and Zeus Sarapis perpetrates the same double irony upon the Olympian member of the group as in the preceding instance, for the person designated is simply "High-priest of the Augusti." Here is unmistakable epigraphic evidence that, in one locality at least, the emperor cult pushed into the back-ground and practically superseded the Olympian system.[172]

2. The Manifoldness and Pervasiveness of the Emperor-Cult

We have now come to a point where it will be profitable to attempt a rapid review and summary of results.

The Roman imperial-cult had behind it the force of a primary instinct and the accelerated

[170] 409 *cf.* also 410 410, 411, 412.
[171] 417.
[172] *Cf.* Wissowa: *Op. cit.*, p. 72; Beurlier: *Le Culte Impériale*, p. 17; Sterret: p. 290. The latter says that all the temples at Kara Baulo are identified with the emperor worship.

momentum of ancient and persistent custom. A world-wide movement recorded in the earliest documents of Babylonia and in the latest of the Roman Empire has passed in review before us. The worship of rulers arose among the Romans partly *de novo* as a native and spontaneous action, partly through the operation of countless converging lines of influence.

In the early days of the republic, when offices were temporary and filled by the choice of an electorate, certain powerful individuals were singled out for honors indistinguishable from those offered to the gods, while generals and pro-consuls came back from the provinces with the prestige of deification. The movement reached a preliminary climax in the honors granted to the dominant personality of Julius Cæsar, who during his life-time was deified abroad and in Italy, and immediately upon his decease was officially put in the company of the Immortals. In the reign of his successor, Augustus, an organized cult of the Divus Julius was established and almost simultaneously with it a priesthood and worship of the reigning emperor was put into operation. Throughout the empire, particularly in the provinces, but to a certain extent in Italy itself, the combined worship of the *divi* and the living rulers was carried on under the highest imperial and local auspices.

Döllinger enables us to grasp the whole process and to visualize both its forward movement in the direct line of the Augusti and its lateral outreach to include those who were deified through their close association with the emperor, when he states[173] that, from the beginning to the time of Diocletian, there were fifty-three solemn consecrations, including those of fifteen women. There were in Rome[174] temples of the Divus Iulius; of the Divus Augustus;[175] of the *divi;*[176] of the Divus Claudius;[177] of Clementiae Caesaris;[178] of the Divus Marcus Aurelius; of the Divus Trajanus; of the Divus Vespasianus; of the Divus Antoninus and Faustina.

This is certainly an indication of the power and influence of the cult. I might go on indefinitely summarizing in this same way, the multitudinous evidences of the universality and pervasiveness of the cult. I think, however, that an intensive look at a limited group of facts will make the situation much clearer.

For example, of flamens and priests of Roma

[173] *Op. cit.,* p. 616. There are extant coins of forty-eight deified royal persons, Duruy: *Hist. Rom.,* Eng. tr., Vol. V, p. 168.
[174] Kiepert and Huelsen—*Formae Urbis,* etc., pp. 74ff.
[175] Situated on the Palatine: see Suet. Tib., 47, *cf. Acta Arvalia:* Henzen, p. LV.
[176] See Henzen: pp. XI and XXXIII, where the Augustan rites are given.
[177] Sueton. Vesp., 9.
[178] Ded. to Julius Cæsar, yr. 44. See Dio, 47:6.

and the Augusti; of Roma alone (once only); or of Roma, *divi* and Augusti, there were twenty in Tarraconencis alone, nine in Tarraco alone. There are extant inscriptions commemorating flamens, sacerdotes, Augustales, or members *ordinis Augustalis* from nineteen localities in Italy.[179] In Pompeii there are records of seven different men named as Augustales.[180] There are from Pompeii seven inscriptions dedicated to one man who must have repeatedly acted as imperial priest.[181]

Another side-light upon the persistence and power of this cult may be drawn from the statement with which Hirschfeld closes his monograph:[182] "The Christian Church in no small degree borrowed for its councils and priests the outward forms, names and insignia of the provincial Kaiser-cult which for three hundred years had formed the visible token of imperial unity in the East and in the West."[183]

[179] See C. I. L., X, p. 1149.

[180] C. I. L., X, 961, 977, 997, 994, 1026 (age of Nero), 1030, 1034, 1066.

[181] Holconius Rufus, C. I. L., X, 830, 837, 838, 840, 943, 944, 947.

[182] *Op. cit.*, p. 862.

[183] Hirschfeld's last paragraph is interesting from another point of view also. He points out how the meaning and significance died out of the cult even while the institutional framework established to carry it on still stood intact.

CHAPTER VII

THE RULER-CULT AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT

1. Its Politico-religious Origin

THAT the ruler-cult everywhere had a semi-political origin, has already become evident. The very fact that the vast majority of those historically known to us as having been deified were either civil or military leaders indicates clearly enough the presence of a powerful political motive in the entire development.

In Persia, at a time sufficiently early to antedate the Zoroastrian documents, the legitimate line of Iranian kings were looked upon as of divine lineage, sole possessors and transmitters of the heavenly glory. In ancient Egypt, we are able to follow from the records the concrete operation of the political factor. The crystallization into a fixed dogma of legitimacy, involving the contemporary ruler, of a vague mythology of the past, was undertaken to establish and legitimatize an irregular and usurping dynasty. The priests of Hierapolis were apparently responsible for the

political revolution which they fostered and completed by means of this new religious dogma. In all this the union of religion and state-craft is evident.

In the case of Alexander of Macedon the political motive is still more plainly discernible. Alexander was not of the royal Egyptian line but an alien conqueror who could not, according to any strict interpretation of the established doctrine, be the legitimate ruler of Egypt. Nevertheless, he possessed the ancient right by which all dynasties were originally established—the right of irresistible power. Under these circumstances, the priests, when called upon, found a way to reconcile their sacred dogma with the exigencies of the situation. The conqueror was proclaimed Son of Re, by adoption, which, of course, involved an actual physical apotheosis. From a non-political point of view this ceremony was a sycophantic farce, but it would take a very wise man to tell what else the priests could have done.

In the case of the Roman rulers, the evidence points in the same direction. The religion of Rome from the earliest days of the City-state was political in character. By the *ius divinum* worship was put in the hands of state officials.[184] Next

[184] Polybius (Hist., vi, 56) claims that religion was invented in order to keep the unruly masses in order. The basis of his argument is the Roman state-religion.

came the worship of Roma, the deified Genius, so to speak, of the Roman state, preceding or accompanying the deification of the emperors and, as has often been pointed out, forming an intermediate and transitional form of worship between the traditional deities and the nascent imperial system. Moreover, it is a significant fact, that the organized movement leading toward imperial deification began in the provinces where the imperial rule was most powerfully felt in bringing order out of political chaos. Döllinger[185] says that the longing for a world-deliverer, lacking its true object, turned to the world-conqueror. "He delivered men from the chaos of civil war and the tyranny of pro-consuls."

Nor is it difficult to see how religion and civic interest should thus be intertwined. The relationships between Church and State, that is, between the people as a political entity and the same people as a worshiping body, have always been intimate, difficult to define in theory and still more difficult to separate in practice.

Civil administration bears so directly and so powerfully upon all human interests, is so fraught with weal or woe to all mankind, that the wielder of political authority tends to become one of the elemental powers of the world, stands apart from

[185] H. J., p. 614.

the rest of humanity, and gathers himself something of the exaltation and awfulness of the supernatural. As a matter of fact, the process is not altogether artificial or imaginary. An autocrat with legions of armed men under his command and with the resources of a world-empire at his disposal, with authority of life and death over millions of his fellow-men, actually exercises some functions of deity.

As Boissieu says:[186] "Nous voilà en présence de la véritable divinité de l'époque impériale, de la divinité de l'Empéreur; divinité visible, agissante, puissante pour protégèr comme pour nuire, dispensatrice souveraine et réalle des honneurs et de la fortune; Lare suprême de la patrie que résume en lui tous les intérêts et tous les pouvoir de l'État."

Granted the polytheistic system to start with, there would seem to be a place for a deity with a sphere of operation so vast and with a power so great as those possessed by the Roman emperor.[187] Of this I shall have more to say hereafter.

[186] *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

[187] The fact so well stated by Aust (*op. cit.*, p. 22) should always be kept in mind in this connection: "The gods (of the Romans) have no life for themselves alone. Their activity is expressly confined to the service of men. What the religion loses in comprehensiveness, it gains in intensity."

2. Its Influence in Consolidating the Empire

Accepting the fact, which needs no further elaboration, that the process of imperial deification had behind it a political motive, we should next consider its use in the furtherance of political organization. The emperor-cult was the only available religious instrument for promoting the unification of the empire. The traditional Græco-Roman system possessed no inter-racial organization, comparable to the Christian Church, by which a group-consciousness transcending the ordinary limits of race or clan could be formed. It was thus local, fragmentary and chaotic. There was no imperial quality in it. Even where cognate deities were worshiped and even after the wandering of the gods began and syncretism took place on a large scale, the result was confusion, not unification. And for the most part, the deities of the old system remained what they always had been, local and fixed.

Into this chaos came the empire, first with a conquering army bearing everywhere the standards and illustrating the name and dignity of the emperor. Following the irresistible thrust of the army came administrative officials, including priests of the imperial cult. Altars were set up.

Men of eminence in their cities, towns, or even provinces, were selected as Augustales or cultores of the new worship. Elaborate rites, including brilliant festal celebrations with public games and solemn sacrifices, were established in important centers of population and government throughout the empire—all of which tended to focus countless blending lights of splendor upon the person of the emperor. The inevitable result was unification. The emperor's name was carried throughout his vast dominions and his power known and felt everywhere. The center of this system is the imperial throne at Rome; its circumference, the outermost boundaries of the empire; its radii, the countless major and minor officials who wear the livery and perform the rites of the deified emperor, and in so doing bind every community however remote and almost every individual to the royal person by the two-fold bond of political loyalty and religious devotion. It is not too much to say that the only deity equally well-known in every locality of the Roman Empire was the emperor.

Mommsen [188] has outlined brilliantly the building up of this vast imperial structure. The details were not left to chance or local enthusiasm. Far-sighted political genius swept the whole em-

[188] *Röm. Gesch.* Band V, passim.

pire and selected key-positions for the establishment of shrines, temples and local worship.

As we have already seen, Drusus established [189] an altar Romae et Genio Augusti at Lugdunum (Lyons) at the junction of the Sâone and Rhone rivers. Here native priests, chosen by the united Gallic provinces themselves, carried on the imperial rites. At Colonia Agrippina (modern Cologne) the chief town of the Ubii, there was a great altar and in the year 9 B.C. the officiating priest, Segimundus, the son of Segestes, was prince of the native royal house. At the sources of the Neckar, near the modern Rottweil, were the Aræ Flaviæ, established by Titus or Domitian in a settlement made by Vespasian. Mommsen has a most suggestive note here. He says (I condense) that in all probability there were other altars here beside the chief one named, as is shown by "das Zurücktreten des Roma cults neben dem der Kaiser."

Here as elsewhere the all-absorbing tendency of the imperial cult showed itself. It pushed every other worship into the background and seized the whole empire in its all-inclusive grasp. At Sarmigetusa, in the mountains of western-central Dacia, an altar was established for that province. As a striking instance of the extent of this organ-

[189] See Dessau: I. L. S., v. 1, p. 31, No. 112.

ization and the quality of the personnel entering into it, we may instance Polemon, "King of Pontus and perpetual high-priest of the emperor and the imperial house." [190] Also, in Britain, there were central towns for the emperor cult though we do not know in which of the three legionary camps the governor of the province had his residence. We do know, however, that the same camp was the seat of the provincial council and "the common emperor-worship." [191]

There is another aspect of this whole matter of imperial unification which will come up for more detailed discussion later. I may merely hint at it here. Political action and re-action are often measurably equal. A strong and elaborate device for promoting unification, when it does not work, becomes divisive in proportion to its original thrusting power. In several instances the imperial cult failed of its purpose, incidentally, perhaps, as in Camolodunum in West Britain, where a rebellion broke out under Paullinus after the walls of the temple to the god Claudius had been put up, or under the same Segimundus who was imperial priest for the Ubii. In two instances, at least, the attempt to enforce conformity in the worship of the emperor thrust deeply into the unity of

[190] Mommsen: *Op. cit.*, p. 293 (does not give his authority).
[191] Mommsen: *Op. cit.*, p. 176.

the empire. I refer to the Jews and the Christians. In the latter case, particularly, the conflict between Paganism and Christianity arose in direct connection with the worship of the emperor. This topic will be resumed in its proper place, but its significance just here is not to be overlooked.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RULER-CULT AND THE POSITION OF THE EMPEROR

1. Deification and the Mind of the Emperor

THIS system of ruler-worship inevitably had a very important influence upon the position of the emperor. Under normal circumstances, altogether apart from any investment with divine dignities and honors, the imperial position was one of almost limitless power and responsibility. In itself the administrative burden involved was sufficiently heavy to weigh down any but the most robust intelligence. Clothed, however, by these popular adorations with enormously enhanced distinction, the burden must have been little short of absolutely crushing. What human mind could stand such world-wide persistent, organized adulation? It would seem that if the emperor himself, even for a moment, sincerely believed what the people were taught and undoubtedly believed concerning him, the result must have been

madness. This supposition would seem to be fully justified by the biography of the Cæsars. It can scarcely be doubted that the system of ruler-worship had much to do with the production of the semi-insane, or wholly insane, monsters, such as Caligula, Nero and Domitian, who blackened the history of imperial Rome with such incredible follies and infamies. In this way the working out of the system contributed something to its own overthrow. On the other hand, it seems clear to me that the sanest members of the royal group were those whose attitude toward their own divinity was, to say the least, ambiguous. I should place in this class Tiberius, Titus and Vespasian.

In order to bring out this point let us contrast Gaius Caligula and Tiberius.

Caligula began his career with the customary homage to the *imagines* Cæsarum.[192] Not long after his accession, at a public banquet, he shouted: "Εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἷς βασιλέυς." [193]

From that time "divinam majestatem asserere sibi coepit." [194] He systematically and dramatically placed himself alongside the gods, playing successively the parts of Neptune, Juno (sic), Diana, Venus, Hercules, Bacchus, and Apollo,

[192] Suet. Cal., XIV.
[193] Iliad, 2.204.
[194] Suet. Cal., XXII.

changing his make-up to suit each rôle.[195] He demanded worship, claimed that he had intercourse with the moon-goddess and that his sister was equally intimate with Jupiter.

Dio affirms that he did these things, not as those who are accustomed consciously to play an assumed rôle, ἀλλὰ πάνυ δοκοῦντες τὶ εἶναι. In other words, he took the ascriptions of deity to himself seriously. Mommsen says: "Dass Kaiser Gaius so ernsthaft wie sein verwirrter Geist es Vermochte, sich fur einen wirklichen und liebhaften Gott hielt, wusste alle Welt, und die Juden und der Statthalter auch."[196] An indication that Caligula took his divinity seriously is afforded by his remarks to the Jewish legation.[197]

Another striking and portentous fact is to be considered here. Caligula made his sister, Drusilla, his concubine, and upon her death fourteen specific divine honors were bestowed upon her, so that she became by law *diva*. These included a divine name (Panthea), a declaration of immortality, a witness to her physical apotheosis, shrines, priests, priestesses, and severe penalties for sacrilege. I cannot resist the conclusion that in the relationship of Gaius and Drusilla, we have some-

[195] Dio, 59.11.12.
[196] *Römische Gesch.*, B. V., p. 516.
[197] See below, p. 127.

thing far more significant than mere erotic degeneracy. Have we not here the direct influence of the Ptolemies and their predecessors,—the same idea that the blood of the gods must be kept pure and the same method of putting the idea into effect?

It is generally admitted that Caligula was mad. The question is, however, did he believe that he was divine because he was mad, or become mad because he believed himself to be actually divine?

The consensus of facts leads me to the conclusion that the latter is true. His undoubtedly ill-balanced mind was actually overturned by the general acceptance of his divinity.

In striking contrast with Caligula, stands Tiberius. This powerful monarch's attitude to his own divinity at first thought seems ambiguous.[198] He was ferociously devoted to the cult of Augustus—more than ordinarily reticent as to his own. There were five items at least in the law governing sacrilege toward Augustus,[199] some of them going to absurd lengths, which were rigorously enforced. For example, a man was put to death for allowing honors to be given him on one of the

[198] According to Hirschfeld, Tiberius, while living, had no temple in the West and imperial priests in a few cities only (*op. cit.*, p. 842), *cf.* C. I. L., IX, 652: X, 688; IV, 1180. On the other hand, we have coins of Tib. in which he calls himself "Filius Divi Augusti" (see Eckhel, D. N. A., VI, 192f).

[199] Suet. Tib., 58.

days sacred to Augustus. The inhabitants of the city of Cyzicus lost their liberties, one of the chief counts against them being their omission of honors due to Augustus.[200] Divine honors without stint were offered to Tiberius. In the year 26 A.D. it is said that eleven towns petitioned for the privilege of building temples to the reigning emperor. The privilege of building a temple to Tiberius, his mother, and the Senate, together with Roma, was granted to Smyrna and refused in other instances.

In connection both with his compliance and refusal, Tiberius is said to have offered an explanation [201] which exactly brings out my point. After saying that a single act of compliance with such a request does not demand an apology, he says: "but to be deified throughout the provinces and intrude my own image among the statues of the gods, what would it be but vain presumption, and with the multiplication of such honors, vanescet Augusti honor si promiscis adulationibus vulgatur." He also expressly states [202] that he does not pretend to be anything more than a man. He refused special divine honors and on one occasion: "Dominus appellatus a quodam denuntiavit, ne se

[200] Tac. Ann., 4.36; *cf.* Eckhel D. N. A., II, p. 546, 7, and V. M., IX, 11.4. Dio., 57.6.
[201] Tac. *Ann.*, 4.37.
[202] Tac. *Ann.*, 4.38.

amplius contumeliae causa nominare." [203] This modesty Suetonius ascribes to policy and says: "paulatim principem exseruit." [204]

I do not agree with this judgment. The inconsistencies of Tiberius are apparent rather than real. He undoubtedly believed in the institution of the *divi* and was a rigid supporter of that cult both personally and officially. On the other hand, he did not relish divine honors for himself, nor did he believe himself divine. Here again it may be difficult to say whether his robust intelligence in thus refusing assent to the popular idea concerning himself was cause or effect, but it still remains true that disbelief was really necessary to the maintenance of sanity.

A similar contrast might be worked out between Vespasian and Domitian. Vespasian, honest old soldier that he was, never took the ascription of deity to himself seriously, as his famous *mot in articulo mortis* proves: "Vae, inquit, puto deus fio." [205] On the other hand, Domitian was gloomily jealous lest any divine honor which he explicitly claimed might be omitted.[206] [207]

Another still more far-reaching result came

[203] Suet. Tib., 26, 27.
[204] *Ibid.*, 33.
[205] Suet. Vesp., 23.
[206] Philos. App. of Ty., VII:24. A magistrate is accused of not calling Domitian "Son of Minerva." *Cf.* Stat. Silv., IV, 3.128.
[207] On Titus, see Dio: 66:19.

from the changed position of the emperor through deification. In the long run, paganism was compelled to stake everything on one throw. It centred every religious interest in the emperor. It thus compromised and discounted its traditional system. The Olympians were pushed into the background. When, therefore, paganism was brought face to face with Judaism in the Dispersion and still more with nascent Christianity, and compelled, intellectually speaking, to fight for its life, it had to stand or fall by its imperialized system. It was internally discredited and weakened at the center at the moment when the attack from without came. The emperor-cult, in which paganism culminated, did much to prepare the way for its ultimate overthrow. The emperor as the visible object of adoration, the divine head and living embodiment of religion became its shame and disgrace.

That leads us to another climactic point in the discussion.

2. The Ruler-cult as a Symptom of Decadence

a. the taint of sycophancy

It may be due to the rigorous intolerance of a mind to which the whole system is grotesque as

well as alien, but I find it difficult to believe in the religious sincerity of much of this prostration before the throne of the emperor. The only consideration which could make this system even tolerable is that it should be genuine. Then we could look upon it as a sincere illusion. But the taint of sycophancy is in the air. I can understand readily enough that on its popular side, with the ignorant populaces of Italian, Grecian and Oriental cities and villages, such a movement might be both spontaneous and genuine. There are other aspects of it, however, which are not so easy to harmonize with sincerity. Take, for example, the words of some of the great intellectuals, spoken or written in direct address to the living emperors. Virgil begins and ends the first book of the Georgics [208] by invoking, among other gods, Augustus, to whom he attributes the right to choose his own place amid the celestial beings enthroned on high as well as the power to control the sun, the weather, the fruitage of the earth and the operations of the sea. He adds to this, in the second invocation, a statement that the gods have but grudgingly lent Augustus to the earth and that the loan is likely to be recalled at any time.

Compare with this Pliny's address to Trajan [209]

[208] Georgica I: 24-40, 501f., *cf.* Hor. Ode I:2, *cf.* Preller: *Op. cit.*, p. 771.
[209] Pan., 74, 5.

in which he asserts that the state could imagine no addition to its good fortune: "nisi ut di Caesarem imitentur." Is this merely oratory or exaggerated flattery or genuine adoration?

The climax of this mode of address is attained by Lucan [210] who affirms that when Nero ascends to heaven, all the gods will yield place to him and allow him to choose any sphere of divine action which he prefers. If by any chance these utterances are allowed to pass, what are we to say of the oath made by [211] "vir praetorius" that he saw the form of Augustus ascend into heaven, or that of the Senator Livius Geminus who swore that he saw Drusilla, the sister and concubine of Caligula, ascend on high and take her place among the gods? [212] Ball says: [213] "Caligula's crazy performances as a divinity obviously brought the whole idea of the imperial deification into a degree of disrepute, undermining whatever dignity attached to its first august subjects." And yet the system lasted almost two hundred years after Caligula's time and produced some of its most characteristic results in the later period.

Undermining this institution was evidently a very slow and difficult process. This, too, I take

[210] 1:45.
[211] Suet. Aug., 100.
[212] Dio, 59:11.
[213] Satire of Seneca, p. 38.

to be symptomatic, for I am much inclined to think that it could have been undermined much more easily if it had been more sincere. At least, a partial justification for this paradox may be found in the Ludus of Seneca [214] on the deification of Claudius, taken in its historical context.

Taken, I repeat, in its historical context, for it cannot be understood otherwise, it becomes a most suggestive commentary on the time and is absolutely *à propos*. As Caligula introduced the element of mental pathology into the history of the imperial cult, so Claudius introduced the element of farce and comedy. He was the cause of much wit, good, bad and indifferent, in others, among them the moralist Seneca. The most interesting feature of the situation, however, is not the mordant treatment of Claudius, but the side-light it throws upon the Roman attitude toward the great sanctities. Certain facts are to be noted in connection with the Ludus. Claudius was murdered at the order, if not actually by the hand, of Agrippina, the mother of Nero. Claudius was immediately deified and Agrippina was appointed a priestess to attend upon the new divinity's rites. Seneca's brother made a rather brilliant jest to the effect

[214] This work seems to have borne the title of Ἀποκολοκύντωσις or "pumkinification"—the implication of which, as applied to Claudius, is quite obvious. Consult Ball: "The Satire of Seneca" (N. Y., 1902) for a complete discussion of the critical questions which center around the book.

that Claudius had been dragged to heaven with a hook, and Nero followed with a ghoulish joke about mushrooms being the food of the gods.[215] But neither of these could compare in ghastliness with the appointment of his murderous wife as priestess of Claudius, and her son, who was an accomplice in the murder and its beneficiary, to deliver the *laudatio* which was an essential part of the deification. But the real kernel of what I wish to bring out is that the eulogy upon the *divus,* pronounced by the youthful Nero, was written by Seneca, the author of the Ludus. And, it was so absurdly eulogistic that, solemn as the occasion was, the audience burst into irrepressible laughter, "nemo risui temperare." [216] In this Ludus not only was the new *divus* unmercifully lampooned, his provincial birth, his defective speech, his halting gait, his absent-mindedness, his hasty and foolish decisions, all his idiosyncrasies and personal defects ridiculed and held up to public scorn, but the gods themselves are made a jest of, and the whole system of solemn deification is turned into broad comedy and laughed at to the very echo.

Nothing in the absurd and obscene caperings of Caligula would seem to be designed so utterly to destroy faith and reverence in the imperial sys-

[215] Suet.: Nero, 33.
[216] Tacitus: *Ann.,* 13.3.

tem as the corrosive satire of this consummate lampoon. There are several items in this situation which should be recalled here. In spite of the ridiculous personal peculiarities of Claudius, which were a matter of familiar court jesting, the deification went on according to the regular order. In spite of the fact that the emperor was about equally despised and hated, the deification was performed according to the established ritual. In spite of the fact that the leading performers in this dismal farce were known to be the murderers of the late emperor and the deadliest foes of his race, it yet proceeded according to rule.

Suetonius says [217] of Claudius: "Funeratus est sollemni principium pompa et in numerum deorum relatus; quem honorem a Nerone destitutum abolitum que recepit mox per Vespasianum." This is the whole situation *in parvo*. What a curious and inconsistent fabric of murder and glorification, adulation and detraction, fulsome praise and bitter scorn, the whole incident presents! What it emphatically does not present, however, is genuine feeling and single-minded devotion.

b. THE GLORIFICATION OF BAD MEN

Alongside of this evidence of decadence must be placed another equally manifest. The system

[217] Div. Claudius, 45. Dio, 60.

itself led to the glorification of evil men. A bad emperor makes a bad god. The very choice or acceptance of such men as Nero or Diocletian as objects of adoration is itself a judgment, as it is a revelation, of paganism. And if it be asserted that these men wore the purple and therefore the people had no choice but to worship them, the sufficient answer is Sejanus, the vile and treacherous favorite of Tiberius. According to Dio,[218] Tiberius, solely to prevent divine honors being paid to Sejanus, decreed that henceforth sacrifices should be offered to no man, and included his own person in the prohibition, in order that his purpose might not be defeated. In spite of all the circumstances, the people voted honors on the death of Sejanus, who was executed by Tiberius, —"solemnities," says Dio, "not customary even for the gods." Sejanus was not royal; he was everything he should not have been, and yet the popular impulse to deify him was beyond imperial control. The system as a whole, together with the society that produced and fostered it, and ultimately the religion that molded the society must be held responsible for the deification not only of Sejanus, but of Poppaea Sabina, her infant daughter who lived but three months, of Verus the col-

[218] 58.8.4, *cf.* Velleius Pater., 2.127 for fulsome praise of Sejanus.

league of Marcus Aurelius, of Larentina, a public woman so notorious that Tertullian expresses the wish that any one of a number of such famously infamous women of Rome might have been chosen for such honors rather than she,[219] Simon Magus,[220] and worst of all, Hadrian's beautiful and unspeakable male favorite, Antinous.[221] I confess that I have come upon few things in all history more revolting than the widespread and elaborate worship, with priests, temples, ritual and sacred places, offered to this blot on the human race, whose very name and memory are an offense.[222] Only a decadent society, with a diseased and moribund religiousness, could have produced such a phenomenon.[223] It is evident that a system capable of such monstrous perversions as these mentioned and others like them—for my instances are by no means exhaustive—was bound to demoralize

[219] Apologetica, 13.

[220] *Ibid.*

[221] See Just. Mar., I, Apol. 29; Athenagoras Suppl. 30; Orig. adv. Celsum, iii.36-38; Eusebius, H. E., IV, 8; Tert. adv. Mar., 1.18.

[222] I, myself, worked through the list of flamens or priests of Antinous, and found the following astonishing number: C. I. G., 280. 1119, l. 11, Διονύσιος Παιανιεύς ἱερεὺς Αντινόου.
1121, l. 23,
1122, l. 42,
1128, l. 19, l. 30, speaks of Hadrian as a god.
1216,
1120, l. 27, priest of Antinous.
1131, l. 4,

[223] *Cf.* what Pliny says about earlier consecrations in Paneg., 11.

and weaken religion. Religion, which is a relationship between man and the object of his worship, rises or falls necessarily with the dignity and worth of that object. An evil deity involves the swift and utter demoralization of his worshipers; and the final and hopeless collapse of paganism, with all its prestige, organic fitness and official power was due in some measure to this system, which, as I have already said, was at once its culmination and its ruin. We have now to trace that process.

CHAPTER IX

THE RULER-CULT AND POLYTHEISM

1. The Self-Contradiction of Polytheism

POLYTHEISM has two fundamental weaknesses which contributed concurrently to the establishment and rapid advance of the Emperor-cult. In the first place, it is essentially contradictory in that it distributes among many, divine qualities and functions which logically belong to one only. The concept of deity is itself fundamentally unitary. When the Babylonians, for example,—to take one instance where hundreds are available,—called Bel, "Lord of all being," [224] they implicitly denied the existence of any other to whom such a title can properly be applied. When, therefore, the polytheists do actually apply that title to a multitude of deities, an element of confusion is at once introduced which is never wholly extruded.

[224] *Cf.* Titles of Snefru, p. 22, n. 15, and the judicious remarks of Fairbanks: Greek Religion, pp. 23,24.

Polytheism is always driven by a gad-fly of unrest, seeking and never finding an ultimate center and pole, around which thought and life may steadfastly and harmoniously revolve. The monotheist has this center—the polytheist never. His thought is chaotic because the world, as he conceives it, is directed by a plurality of wills which do not offer any secure guarantee of cosmic harmony. His life is distracted because of the difficulty of finding any god or group of gods adequate to his changing needs or realized with sufficient clearness of definition to meet any of his deeper longings.

The polytheist, in other words, is always on the search for the ultimate—a final, secure resting-place of faith and confidence—which does not belong to the system.

The polytheist, therefore, is essentially migratory and his system of thought and worship is in constant flux. He selects some deities to the neglect of others. He abandons one and takes up another. Tertullian [225] makes powerful apologetic use of this habit of selection and shifting of allegiance, which, as he says, if the gods were real beings would involve a truly impious degree of irreverence. It is inevitable, as all history proves.

[225] Apologetica, 13.

2. Polytheism Essentially Elementary and Inadequate

Along with this tendency, is another equally powerful, to outgrow the gods one has at any given stage of life. Tiele says that the development of religion is a phase of deepening self-consciousness. The gods of the traditional Græco-Roman pantheon were outgrown in many ways by their worshipers in the age of the empire. I shall take just one phase of change, as particularly germane at this point. The traditional gods were essentially personified nature-powers. In the course of time, especially in the period of the City-state, certain additional social and economic functions were ascribed to these simple and rather dimly conceived deities,[226] but they still remained essentially nature-powers. They were gods of the open air, of the outer world; related to the sky, the forests, the mountains, the fields, the biology of the seasons, war and the other common human experiences of human life from birth to death. Such were the *traditional* gods of the Roman people and so far as the native religious genius of the people had expression, such were their gods to the latest period of their history. The importa-

[226] On the early gods of Rome see Fowler: R. F., pp. 34f; R. E. R. P., pp. 118f, 147f; *Mythology of all Races,* Vol. I. part III.

tion of foreign cults began early and went on with increasing momentum during the period of imperial expansion, but none of these imported systems took very deep root or found a really congenial environment. The development of the imperial system, the rise of a world-consciousness, showed the narrowness, the jejune inadequacy of the old system. The old parochial gods were impossible in the empire—even the Olympians were hedged and confined by local cults and identifications. The newly elaborated imperial-cult, grafted, as we have seen, into the most ancient stock of Roman religion, of Roma, the *divi* and the Genius of the living emperor, fitted the times and was seemingly the inevitable outcome of the situation. When the whole world was a parish, and that in the country, or even a City-state set on seven hills, parochial, outdoor or local deities were sufficient; when the parish expanded to a world the old system was bound to go.

3. Emperor-Worship the Final Phase of Paganism

This change was the more inevitable because that old system was breaking down intrinsically. The story of the disintegration of the traditional Græco-Roman religion has been told often enough

and well enough and needs no re-telling here. A concurrence of contributing influences, internal and external, brought about that downfall—most of all, its inherent inadequacy together with the impact of a new and infinitely better system. What one must do, however, is to visualize this process of disintegration and re-integration in terms of the emperor cult. It must not be forgotten that the imperial cult was the characteristic and essential product of religion in the era in which it arose. The internal movement of contemporary paganism is to be understood only through a study of this development, which is its organic self-manifestation.

a. THE SUPERSESSION OF THE OLYMPIANS

A graphic presentation of the point I have in mind is to be found in the great Paris cameo, which represents Tiberius and his family as a group of gods. Tiberius appears as Jupiter, his mother Livia as Ceres, while around him are Germanicus, Antonia, Gaius Caligula and Agrippina. Augustus is rising to heaven on a winged horse; Æneas is handing him a globe representing the world, Drusus sweeps through heaven bearing a shield—which means, I suppose, the Roman triumph—and, at the celestial summit of the glorified group,

sits the Divus Julius, wearing the crown which he declined on earth. In order to understand this significant group, one or two items must be kept in mind. In the process of deification, as we have already noticed, the various recipients of divine honors are frequently given the names of various well-known deities, such as Mars, Dionysus, Jupiter, and others. To take an example from a later time, which is typical all the way, the worship of Hadrian was connected with the contemporary pan-Hellenic revival of which he was the patron. There was a temple foundation to Hadrian at Athens, with games and priestly service. He was known as the "New Zeus pan-Hellenios" and was called the "founding, living god." [227] In the light of this, turn to the cameo. Of the earlier figures of mythology, only a little cupid guiding the winged horse on which Augustus ascends to heaven, and Nemesis, in the back-ground, appear in *propria persona*. The Olympian deities as personal beings have simply ceased to be. They have become abstractions and in evaporating into the functions which they represent they have be-

[227] See Mommsen: Röm. Gesch., B. V., p. 244. For the extent of this cult note the following inscriptions:
C. I. G., 3832, 5852.
C. I. A., III, 10, 16, 21, 34a in which Hadrian is called "son of the God Trajan," 38, 253, 486, 519, 528, in which he is called "*υἱὸς θεοῦ*," 534, 681, 1023, 1128, 1306.
Cf. C. I. L., XIV, 73, 353.

queathed their insignia of office to their living, active, historical, royal successors. Their robes are empty, their thrones unoccupied, their scepters abandoned, their crowns doffed and laid aside, to be taken up, worn, used, and wielded by the members of the royal house. It is evident that if any real faith in the Olympians remained, this cameo picture would be a frightful blasphemy. On the other hand, if, as Euhemerus and the Christian fathers [228] maintained, the Olympian gods were originally men, glorified into deities and then evaporated into abstractions, as some of them undoubtedly were, then the balance would simply be redressed by inverting the process and investing them with personality, by connecting them with rulers who, whether they were divine or not, were certainly real, personal and active. At any rate, this supersession of the older gods by these new deities was the characteristic last phase of ancient paganism. Philostratus says that the statues of Tiberius were looked upon as being more sacred and inviolate than those of Zeus in Olympia, so that it was an impiety to strike a slave carrying a drachma stamped with the imperial image. This is echoed and interpreted by Tertullian, who says:

[228] Tertullian: Apol. 10. According to Lactantius (*De falso Religione,* 1:20) the goddess Flora was a deified Roman prostitute and some of the rites connected with her worship would seem to justify the opinion.

"You do homage with a greater dread and intenser reverence to Cæsar than to Olympian Jove himself. And if you knew it, upon sufficient grounds; for is not any living man better than a dead one whoever he may be?" [229]

b. THE ABSORPTION OF MITHRA AND APOLLO

Another most striking illustration of this absorbing and superseding power of the emperor-cult is to be found in connection with the history of the Mithra worship among the Romans. We now take up the story of the king-cult in ancient Iran where we previously laid it down.[230] It is necessary to reaffirm the statement there made that the theory of the hvarenô or divine glory involves a genuine apotheosis. Prof. Dill says [231] and in so saying echoes Cumont: "The Persians prostrated themselves before their kings but they did not actually adore them as gods." In support of this statement he quotes Athenagoras [232] who speaks of the Persian veneration of the Δαιμῶν of the king which Dill equates with the 'Genius' of the Romans. It is contended that direct apothe-

[229] Appol. Ty., 1.15.
Tertullian: *Apol.* 27. Tertullian, of course, was an Euhemerist so far as the pagan gods were concerned.
[230] See above, p. 20.
[231] *Roman Society Nero to Marcus Aurelius,* p. 617, Cumont: *Myst. of Mithra,* Fr. Ed., p. 79.
[232] VI, 252.

osis is avoided by the mediate address of worship to the royal daimon or *genius*. As we have seen the *practical result* of this conventional device among the Romans was the full and unqualified deification of the ruler.[233] So it was also among the Persians. Moreover, Dill's opinion cannot be supported by an appeal to the Zend Avesta. The facts are these: Undoubtedly, Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism began as a monotheistic movement or, perhaps, I ought to say more strictly an anti-polytheistic and unifying trend, but for many centuries it failed to conquer or assimilate the polytheism which it attempted to displace.

In fact, Zarathustra himself was deified. Darmesteter says emphatically:[234] "All the features in Zarathustra point to a god." As we have already seen, the Persian kings were assimilated to the divine status of Zarathustra himself through their common possession with him of the hvarenô or divine glory, which is by no means a mere halo or aureole surrounding the king but a *substantial divine element* at once physical and transcendental which is derived ultimately from Ahura Mazda but secondarily by a miracle from Zarathustra himself. And here there is discoverable a definite

[233] Minucius Felix says (Oct., XXIX, 5, Halm's ed.) that it was "tutius per Iovis genium peierare quam regis."

[234] For the place of Zarathustra in Mazdaism, see S. B. E., Vol. IV, Int., Sec. 40.

line of historic connection between these ideas of ancient Iran and the Roman system of deification.

Among the gods common to the Indo-Iranian peoples before their separation was Mitra, who was frequently invoked together with Varuna, and also less frequently with Indra.[235] Mitra is evidently the sun-god, as he is identified as the *light* of Varuna, the sky-god.

In the Avesta, Mitra appears as *Mithra.* The identification is evident both from the name and the identical attributes. While these attributes are much more clearly defined in the Avesta they are evidently the same. The conventional title of this deity is "lord of wide pastures." [236]

Mithra is the almost exclusive subject of Yast X,[237] one of the longest in the Avesta, and is addressed in the Mihir Nyayis.[238] The position of Mithra in later Mazdaism and his identity with Mitra in the Vedic system as well as his relationship to Ahura Mazda in the Avestic system indicate clearly that he is a survivor of ancient polytheism who refused to be absorbed in the unifying movement.

In the course of time, all these surviving gods

[235] Hymns of the Atharva Veda, II:28. *Cf.* S. B. E., vol. 42, *sub. voc.*
[236] Venidad: *Fargard,* III, I.1.
[237] Mihir Yast.
[238] 353, 355.

were brought, more or less completely, under Ahura Mazda [239] but Mithra remained god by deputy until the end of the chapter. Of him Ahura Mazda is represented as saying: "I created him as worthy of sacrifice, as worthy of prayer as myself." [240]

Again [241] he is spoken of as the guardian of truth and avenger of lies, "awful, overpowering, worthy of sacrifice and prayer, not to be deceived anywhere in the whole material world," and as "the strong heavenly god." [242] This is manifestly syncretism with the seams not very smoothly ironed out. Mithra is alien to Mazdaism but is artificially included in it.

The importance of Mithra for my purpose lies in his relationship to the imperial system at Rome. The deification of Zarathustra and his reputed successors on the throne of Iran is immediately and inseparably connected with the separate worship of Mithra, the sun-god, as the revelation and embodiment of the remote and dimly conceived Ahura Mazda. The kings were related to Ahura Mazda in much the same fashion as Mithra himself and were, so to say, congeners of the sun-god, sharing with him the nature and glory of

[239] S. B. E., vol. IV, Int., pp. LIX ff.
[240] Yast, XI, 1.
[241] *Ibid.*, I. 5.
[242] *Ibid.*, XXXIII.

Ahura Mazda. The worship of Mithra finally separated itself from the Mazdean system as a whole and entered upon a history of its own. With the Persian conquest, it began a westward movement and by way of Babylon, Greece and the Greek Settlements of Asia Minor, came to Rome. It seems to have been brought by returning legionaries from the Orient and by migrating citizens from incorporated provinces formerly under Persian and Greek rule and spread through the Empire until it became a powerful factor in its later religious life. In the course of this long migration the Mithra cult gathered to itself many strange elements; astrology, demonism and planetary fatalism from Babylon; ritual and symbolism from Phrygia; mysticism from Alexandria; personification and plastic representation from the Greeks, so that finally when it arrived at Rome it had become the most inclusive syncretism the world had ever seen. In spite, however, of this drag-net feature of its progress, the core of the Persian sun-worship in Mithraism remained unchanged. It is said that the name of Mithra was never translated.

It reached Rome, if the one slight notice we have is to be accepted, in 70 B.C. with the Cicilian pirates conquered by Pompey.[243] Little is known

[243] Plutarch: *Pompey*, c. 24.

of the system, except that it seems first to have spread among the lowly, until the period of the Antonines, probably because the movement really did not get under way until the incorporation of Cappadocia, Pontus and Commagene, where its centers were, a process which was not completed until the reign of Vespasian.

In the course of time, it swept the empire and left behind it abundant monumental and epigraphic testimony to its spread and power. It lasted in out-of-the-way places until the fifth century.

The most striking fact in this whole romantic history, however, is yet to be told; namely, that this world-movement, sweeping in from every direction upon Rome, the most comprehensive and powerful revival of paganism in all its phases known to history, which was thought by many to threaten the very life of Christianity itself, was, in the final outcome, hitched to the chariots of the Cæsars and made the theoretical justification of emperor worship. The blending of Mithraism with the imperial cult probably began in a tentative and secret way under Tiberius and found open expression in the reigns of Caligula and Nero, both of whom were made solar deities in the East.

On the other hand, the underground preparation for the final union of these two systems began

long before this. In the year 40 B.C. occurred the famous "dinner of the twelve gods" at which, according to the lampooner of the occasion, "Impia dum Phoebi Caesar mendacia ludit."[244] This was, perhaps, not a serious presentation of himself in the character of Apollo by Augustus but later developments show that it remained in his thought. In the year 28 B.C. Augustus initiated a revival of the Apollo cult by the dedication of a new and magnificent temple to Apollo on the Palatine, and in the library hard-by, he set up a statue of himself adorned with the attributes of Apollo.[245] This movement toward the identification of himself with the Apolline and sun-worship culminated in the Ludi Saeculares of the year 17 B.C. In the course of this ceremony the carmen of Horace, written at the dictation of Augustus, was sung by a chorus of boys and girls facing the great temple of Apollo "in quo solis erat supra fastigia currus." [246] To the sun thus represented the lines beginning "Alme Sol, curru nitido diemque" [247] were addressed, and a little later Augus-

[244] Suet.: Aug., LXX.

[245] The Scholium of Servius (ad Bucol., IV:10) says: *"Tuus iam regnat Apollo,* ultimum saeculum ostendit, quod Sibylla Solis esse memoravit et tangit Augustum cui simulacrum factum est cum Apollinis cunctis insignibus." Augustus bore the title "Son of Apollo"—*cf.,* Gardthausen: *Augustus und Seine Zeit:* I, p. 46, II, p. 15, n8; 16, n9, 580, Horace: Odes III: XIV.

[246] Propertius, III:28.

[247] *Carmen Saeculare,* 9, 50.

tus himself is brought forward in a skillful allusion to the Julian family,—the never forgotten "Clarus Anchisae Venerisque Sanguis." Fowler well says that "the listeners forget the Capitoline gods as they note the allusion to Venus" and the world-wide "prestige of Augustus." [248]

In this way the worship of Apollo Helios was subordinated to the emperor cult and in due time the allied Mithra sun-worship suffered the same fate.[249] In a well-known passage of Dio already quoted, Tiridates is represented as greeting Nero as Mithra, while this emperor and his successors are represented as wearing an imperial crown with darting sun-rays. The Emperor Gallienus is said to have gone about clothed in a complete set of vestments symbolizing the sun-god.[250] The later emperors took the solar titles "Dominus et Deus Natus" which makes them manifestations or "descents" of the sun-deity. This god comes down from heaven to earth in the person of the emperor. It is quite possible that the mysterious Fortuna worship which also merges into the emperor cult (the phrase "Fortuna Populi Romani" becomes "Fortuna Augusti" from Ves-

[248] R. E. R. P., p. 446.
[249] It is to be remembered that Apollo and Mithra had already been combined among the Greeks—see Farnell, *op. cit.*, IV, 128 n. 6; 138 n. a.
[250] Trebellius Pollio: Gal., 16:18.

pasian's time) may have been another form of sun-worship.[251] However that may be, the other undoubted forms of heliolatry, including Mithraism, certainly were assimilated by the emperor cult. Commodus (180-192 A.D.) was an initiate both of Isis and Mithra and assumed the Mithraic titles "Aeternus" and "Invictus."[252] [253] This is the final and official step in the imperial assumption of deific solar prerogatives. Henceforth emperor worship and solar worship were identical. As Harnack sums it up: "In the third century Rome was simply the headquarters of the Mithra cult, in which and with which the emperor was worshiped as co-essential with the sun, 'consubstantivum Soli.'" As in earliest Egypt so in latest Rome, the ruler was the embodiment and revelation on earth of the sun-god. This was the last and greatest victory of the ruler-cult. It fell only when paganism as a whole fell under the victorious onset of Christianity. Within paganism itself emperor worship was the final development. For this there is a deep basic reason in the very nature of things.

[251] Fowler: R. F., p. 169. *Cf.* Plut: de Fort. Romae, IV.
[252] Dio, XLII, 15:5.
[253] Practically the entire corpus of literary and epigraphic texts, together with the monumental remains of Mithraism, are cited with a complete critical apparatus for the understanding of them by Cumont (see bibliography *infra.* Dill gives a good summary—*op. cit.*, ch. VI).

4. Polytheism and Pantheism

Polytheism is always rooted in pantheism.[254] Naturism—that is, the immediate worship of natural objects and powers, conceived individually, personified and deified—always carries with it as an implicit and often unconscious premise, the divinity of the world as a whole. Philosophic or self-conscious pantheism, which is for the few who are capable of dealing with abstractions or generalizations, always has underground connection with polytheism,—the popular aspect of the same world view.[255]

[254] On the pantheism of the whole polytheistic system consult Harrison: *Themis, passim,* particularly Ch. X. The data presented in this somewhat confusing book are to be sharply discriminated from the theories erected upon them.

[255] See Fairbairn: Philosophy of the Christian Religion, pp. 241f. *Cf.* Bigg: Origins of Christianity, p. 304. That even Stoic pantheism leads in the direction of deification is well exhibited in the following from Cicero's Somnium Scipionis (De Republica, Ch. XXIV, 26), "Deum te igitur scito esse, si quidem est deus, qui viget, qui sentit, qui meminit, qui providet, qui tam vegit et moderatur et movet id corpus, cui praepositus est, quam hunc mundum ille princeps deus," etc.

The practical impossibility of escaping the power of the man-cult for any one reared in the pagan system, however enlightened and intellectual, is thus strikingly illustrated in the case of Cicero. Collating the citations already made from Cicero, we have the following curious result. Divine honors for himself, "nisi verborum," he declined and he was about equally angered and disgusted by the developments of the Julian-cult; but, when his daughter Tullia died, he persistently held to the idea of erecting a fane to her as a divine being and in the mystic mood of the Somnium Scipionis he developed the idea that man is a deity differing only in degree from "ille princeps deus qui mundum regit."

The swing from one aspect of nature to another in the polytheist's ceaseless and feverish hunt for the ultimate—to which allusion has already been made—is bound to bring him around to man as the final term in the natural process which he recognizes as *divine*.

Naturism, which constantly tends to lose its artificial content of personality and become impersonal and abstract, both develops and reacts into the personalism of man-worship.[226] This justifies the brilliant generalization of Boissieu: "C'était le terme inévitable auquel devait aboutir le panthéisme antique, et, idole pour idole, le dernier des vivants, comme dit Tertullian, était préférable au plus illustre mort." [257] The individual object worshiped is part of a larger whole, which in its totality is divine, but, undivided, is too vast and vague to worship.

[256] Buddhism, Confucianism, and Comtian phenomenal Positivism, all three attempts to substitute impersonal forces or abstract principles for the personalism of religion have, in the end, reverted to the personalism against which they were principally framed. On the transformation of nature-powers into men of heroic dimensions see Réville: Hibbert Lectures for 1884 (N. Y., '84) p. 206. On the combination of nature-powers and deified men see Moore: *Hist. of Religions,* p. 95; Harrison: *Themis,* pp. 445, 6.

[257] Ins. de Lyon, p. 51.

CHAPTER X

THE RULER-CULT AND THE JUDÆO-CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

1. The Jews and Emperor-worship

THE transition from the decadent paganism of the emperor cult to the contemporary thought and worship of the Jews is the entrance into a new world.[258] It would be difficult to exaggerate the sense of relief which one feels in passing from the heated, artificial, incense-laden atmosphere of this court worship into the larger and freer thought of the worshipers of Jehovah. The difference between the self-inclosed pagan thought, which changes from deity to deity but never escapes from a system bounded by nature on the one hand, and man on the other, to the thought of those whose God is a universal, invisible, spiritual and ethical personality can best be realized by a

[258] The generally fair record of the Jews in regard to the emperor cult has one spot on it. In Akmonia the High-priestess of Augustus was a Jewess, and built the Jews a synagogue. Jews were in office when the coin to Poppæa was struck—Ramsay: *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 637-640, 649-51; *cf.* Philo: Flaccum, 7; Legatio ad Gaium, 20.

concrete instance. Caligula's officials in Alexandria forcibly put images into the largest of the Alexandrian temples. A delegation headed by Philo was sent to the Emperor Caligula in the year 39-40 A.D. While this delegation of five distinguished men was actually in Italy, Caligula ordered his own representative, Petronius, to put up his image in the temple at Jerusalem.

The members of the delegation presented themselves before the emperor, were put off at first, then were received with insults; but the point is that, when Caligula tried to force them to worship him, they refused and their resistance, though courteously expressed, was so inflexible that Caligula had to yield. Capricious, tyrannical and vicious though he was, he could not browbeat nor bend these men, who refused to bow the knee in the presence of this new idol, as their ancestors had refused to bow before the image of Nebuchadnezzar. The baffled emperor saved his face by declaring: *οὐ πονηρὸι μᾶλλον ἢ δυστυχεῖς εἶναι μοι δοκόυσιν ἄνθρωποι κὰι ἀνόητοι*, etc.[259]

2. Christianity and Emperor-worship

The anti-pagan movement which ultimately destroyed the emperor cult, with cognate forms of

[259] Philo: Legatio ad Gaium, 11, 35, 42, 43.

paganism, began with the Jews, among whom Christianity, which was the heir of Jewish monotheism, was cradled. Christianity made use of the Jewish Scriptures and was powerfully molded by them. On the other hand, it was Christianity which freed the essential Jewish teaching from its particularism and made it a world-power. It was not Judaism which was called upon to resist to the death the pan-Roman Imperial system, but Christianity. The reason for this is not far to seek.

a. THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND THE IMPERIAL-CULT

The founder of Christianity was born under Augustus and crucified under Tiberius. The last survivor of His immediate disciples suffered under Domitian in the last decade of the first century.

By the time of Valentinianus, and midway of the fifth century, the emperor cult had lost its power, although the official frame-work of it still stood. Meanwhile, nominally Christian emperors like Constantine had been officially *divi* and had winked at the continuance of the pagan family ritual which coupled their names with those of the gods.

An alleged Christian writer, at the end of the

period now under review, could write: (milites) "jurant autem per Deum, et per Christum, et per Spiritum Sanctum, et per majestatem Imperatoris, quae secundum Deum generi humano diligenda est et colenda. Nam Imperatori, cum Augusti nomen accepit, tamquam praesenti et corporali Deo fidelis est praestanda devotio, et impendendus pervigil famulatus." [260] He vainly tries to soften this evident compromise with paganism by saying: "He serves God who faithfully honors him who rules by the authority of God."

It is evident enough that the system died slowly and died hard, but at last it died. Between the deification of Julius Cæsar and the final dissolution of the structure whose corner-stone was laid in that deification,[261] lies the history of nascent Christianity and a little more,—five full centuries of intense, complicated and colorful life, to depict which adequately would take volumes. One thread only of this complex historical fabric I wish to draw out to view.

Just as decadent paganism was interpreted in terms of the emperor cult, its final and supremely characteristic product, so, through the same me-

[260] Vegetius: II.V.

[261] As a terminus ad quem,—in the Codex Justinianus the title "Augustalis" seems to be confined to the Prefect of Egypt and is entirely otiose, see Dig. I:17; C. I., 37; *cf.* Cod. Theod., XVI, X, 11.

dium, in its connection with the same system, I would view nascent Christianity. I do this because in this contact, which became a conflict *a l'outrance,* the essential quality and spirit of Christianity were exhibited as nowhere else. If I mistake not, this is the central thread of early Christian history.

Jesus, in His teaching, does not mention the Roman Empire by name and yet incidentally and also in the general substance of His teaching it is quite evident that He knew that His movement was a challenge to the dominant power of the world—a challenge bound to produce conflict and revolution. Incidentally He made this remark: "οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν κυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν, καὶ οἱ ἐξουσιάζοντες αὐτῶν εὐεργέται καλοῦνται, ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως," etc.[262] It cannot, in view of the context, be a mere coincidence that, in a passage which sharply sets His disciples against the prevalent ethnic custom, Christ should use the familiar divine title of the Ptolemaic kings. The exquisite irony involved in the contrast between the verb-forms and the title marks it as original and as the utterance of one who had a knowledge of world-movements.

Moreover, in the consistent and detailed teaching of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God, which is constituted through the organic working

[262] Luke, 22:25.

of the graces of love, humility and unselfish service, and the building up of a new social order of His adherents,—a kingdom which is not of this world because it is inward and spiritual, there is constant implicit reference to the world-empire of the Cæsars. It is quite evident that, while Jesus was not a revolutionist in the ordinary sense, yet, if His words had power to put themselves into effect and embody themselves in institutions, a new world-empire was sure to be built up on the shattered foundations of the old. It is a simple fact, therefore, that Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword. Though all unrecognized by the authorities, He precipitated a conflict in which every existing social and political institution was involved, and, most of all, the divine preëminence of the emperor. For, both in His teaching and in His personality, the interpretation of which in relation to God, men and the world, was early seen to be the essence of the new religion, Christ became a challenge to Cæsarism.

The first working of that challenge was the well-nigh immediate deliverance of the non-Jewish believers from the trammels of the imperial cult. This emancipation grew more and more evident until, in the writings of the Church Fathers, it became the burden of the Christian propaganda. There are few passages in all literature more no-

ble than those in which Tertullian defines his position and that of his fellow-believers with reference to the empire and its head—in which he refuses to call the emperor god, but prays for him with all honest fervor and devotion.[263]

Of course, this inward principle of Christianity was only gradually disclosed to the world. When it was disclosed, the era of martyrdom was on. Let us trace its development.

b. CHURCH AND EMPIRE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Throughout the entire Book of the Acts, which breaks off abruptly about the year 62 A.D., the attitude of the Romans to the Christians was favorable rather than otherwise. At the end of Acts the Apostle Paul was a prisoner at Rome, but only because of the activity of the Jews against him and as the result of his own appeal to Cæsar. He was treated with extreme leniency and was apparently confident of release.

[263] See Tertullian: Apol.: 5, in which he points out how the Romans made their gods by official decision.
Apol.: 10, in which he affirms that all the gods were deified men.
Apol.: 30, in which he shows how irreverently the Romans treated their gods.
Apol.: 30, in which he states his own position. This is a sublime passage both from a religious and a literary point of view. Nothing could show more clearly how immeasurably Christianity had broadened the mental horizon of its advocates than this passage.
Cf. also *ibid.*, 32-35 and Lact. Div. Inst., 1.13; 17.

c. CHURCH AND EMPIRE IN NERO'S REIGN AND AFTER THE BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION

In the year 64 A.D., the Neronian persecution broke out, in the course of which, if we follow the well-authenticated tradition, Paul lost his life as a martyr, but only after release, a period of freedom, a second arrest and trial. From that time on, the Christians were in danger at any time of being arrested as malefactors, that is, as criminals accused of specific offenses against the law. The next great persecutor of the Christian body was Domitian and, as all competent historians have noted, a great change had come over the attitude of the Roman authorities. Nero's persecution was individual and the attacks upon Christians immediately subsequent were also unorganized and sporadic, based largely upon accusations of *delators* and trumped-up criminal charges.

Under Domitian, as reflected in the Apocalypse and even earlier as shown by the first Epistle of Peter, persecution has become regular, organized and pitiless, but more important still, it has, in the course of about thirty years, become criminal *per se* to be a Christian. No form of wrongdoing other than belonging to the Christian body need be proved against the accused in order to bring immediate condemnation. What brought

about this change of sentiment on the part of the Roman authorities it is not difficult to discover.

d. THE CAUSES OF PERSECUTION

Look first at the charges against Christians which were considered by Roman officials in the early period and those which were dismissed offhand in these same courts.

In every instance recorded in the Book of the Acts, when Paul alone or with his associates was brought before the Roman tribunal, the question turned not on his guilt or innocence, but on the question of *jurisdiction* and the nature of the accusation.

At Philippi,[264] the crowd accused Paul and Silas, as Jews, with teaching what was unlawful for the Romans. The magistrates were evidently greatly disturbed, reasonably enough, for it was dangerous for a Roman city to have such characters as the Christians were accused of being, at large, and hastily and without regard for forms of law, ordered them severely scourged and thrown into prison. This was a mistake, as presently was recognized, for these unknown Jews happened to be Romans. The magistrates were obliged to sue for favor in order to get rid of their troublesome

[264] Acts, 16:19 f.

guests. Here, the charge held, but the magistrates acted illegally in omitting the trial.

At Berœa,[265] it was Jason, the entertainer of the Apostles, who was dragged by the mob before the magistrates and accused. In this instance also the accusation was made in such form that it held, and Jason was bound over for examination. The charge was that the Christian preachers were subverters of social order, that they acted contrary to the decrees of Cæsar by affirming the existence within the empire of another king, Jesus. As I say, this charge was legal in form and competent to the court; as a result, the accusation was received. This fact, namely, that the charge was legally made, explains two things, the disturbance of the magistrates, and the haste of friends to get the Apostles out of the city. It also enables us to understand what constituted a legal charge, by which alone the Christians could be brought within the jurisdiction of the Roman Courts.

At Corinth,[266] Paul was brought before the judgment seat of Gallio, the pro-Consul of Achaia, on the charge of teaching men to worship God contrary to the law. Gallio instantly discharged the accused and drove the accusers away on the ground that the case was not within the jurisdic-

[265] Acts, 17:1-9.
[266] Acts, 18:12 f.

tion of his court. He did not need to try the case and therefore would not.

At Ephesus,[267] trouble arose between the Pauline company and the shrine makers and sellers of the local cult of Diana. Note as germane to our whole discussion the fact that the religious antagonism arises over a purely local worship. It is not Jupiter Capitolinus for whom the fanatics are jealous, but Diana of the Ephesians. And here an extremely interesting fact emerges. The "Asiarchs"—that is, the provincial priests of the emperor cult—took the side of Paul to the extent of giving him a friendly warning not to brave the fury of the mob. The explanation of this rather anomalous proceeding is that the Asiarchs had no zeal for Diana and felt no antagonism to Paul as long as they recognized no danger to the imperial cult. Later, in his famous letter, the Emperor Julian[268] expressly charged the provincial priests with the task of watching the Christians, but at this date the imperial system was not aroused against the Christians. At Ephesus the antagonism to Paul had no legal standing and was easily controlled by the authorities.

In his defense before Festus at Cæsarea, Paul expressly stated that he had done nothing against Cæsar and, to cap the climax of the whole strug-

[267] Acts, 19:23 f.
[268] Letter 49.

gle, when Festus wanted to turn him over to the Jews, appealed to Cæsar. The appeal, of course, carried. Later Agrippa said to Festus that the prisoner might have been released then and there had he not set the machinery of the Empire in operation by appealing to Cæsar.

This is the record in the Book of the Acts—and the lesson is plain. The Christians cannot be brought before Roman magistrates to be tried except for *political offenses,*—offenses against the law of the empire or the person of the emperor. The next inference also is inevitable, that between the close of Acts and the reign of Domitian, when to be a confessed Christian is a capital offense *per se,* Christianity has become a political offense in the two senses just mentioned. The author of I Peter urges the Christians to be brave in suffering [269] and clearly intimates that in his time the believers are suffering simply for being Christians —i.e., for the *name* of Christ. Christianity is no longer a phase of Judaism, to be dismissed as Gallio dismissed it, with a "look ye to it" addressed to disorderly Jews. Christianity is now seen to be a deadly menace to the unity of the empire and the supremacy of the emperor. The Apoca-

[269] I Peter, 4:12-16 Ε'ι ὀνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι χριστοῦ μακάριοι ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται μὴ γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτα. ὡ φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης ἠκακοποιός, ἢὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος εἰ δὲ ὡς χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτο δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοτύῳ.

lypse records in vivid imagery the struggle which had just begun when the first Petrine letter was written. Rome is the great harlot drunk with the blood of the saints. The emperor, or rather the imperial system (not the individual emperor) *considered as the claimant of divine honors,* is the Beast [270]—the sum total of the forces that claim to be god and yet are against God. We find this same antithesis, of paganism centered in the emperor, and the followers of Christ in all these later books of the New Testament. Westcott has said: [271] "In the Emperor, the 'world' found a personal embodiment and claimed divine honors." A single sentence of Paul's over against the attitude of Domitian, the emperor of John's vision, will show how this struggle arose. Paul says: "No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith Jesus is anathema; and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

Of course, these are not merely forms of words —they embody the whole Christian and anti-Christian confessions. The Christian called Jesus "Dominus." He could not also call the emperor "Dominus"—as Domitian loved to be called. "Ad clamari etiam in Ampitheatro epuli die libenter: Domino et Dominae feliciter." [272]

[270] Rev. 13.
[271] Epistle to John, 2d edit., p. 268.
[272] Suetonius: Dom., 13.

This situation, of which we catch lurid glimpses through John's flaming imagery, comes plainly before us in Pliny's letter to Trajan [273] and the latter's rescript in answer. The gist of Pliny's report to the emperor lies in the words: "Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani: confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus, perseverantes duci jussi." He had hesitated formerly, "nomen ipsum, si flagitus careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini peniantur." That hesitation had apparently passed away, or, at any rate did not attach to the action which he had chosen to follow. "Neque enim dubitabam qualecumque esse quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri." The final test for this criminal recalcitrancy was the refusal to offer incense in the presence of the imperial image. Pliny's action was based on the organic law of the empire already in operation, and was approved by Trajan.[274]

When the saintly Polycarp was on his way to trial, he was asked by the captain of police or the latter's father: "What harm is there in saying Lord Cæsar and sacrificing and saving your life?" [275] The aged Confessor was simply asked to call Cæsar "Dominus" and Jesus "Anathema"

[273] Plin. Ep., 90 (97).
[274] *Ibid.*, 91.
[275] Eusebius H. Eccl., IV.15.15.

and he might have lived. But when he refused, the court-room was filled with the cry: "Polycarp hath confessed that he is a Christian!" [276] No other condemnation was necessary or thought of. He had blasphemed the deity of the empire and must die a *confessed malefactor* in the eyes of the law.

e. CONCLUSION—CHRIST AND CÆSAR

The conclusion of the whole investigation is now within our reach and would seem to be inevitable.

There is a difference between paganism and Christianity, not of degree but of kind. That difference becomes an impassable gulf the moment the attempt is made to establish genetic connection between the two systems. It is allowable to call paganism a preparation for Christianity, inasmuch as it constitutes, especially on its philosophical side, the broadest and deepest disclosure in history of the limitations and needs of the human heart. It is not possible in view of the facts, many of the most significant of which have been passed in review here, to make Christianity an evolutionary derivative of the system which it antagonized and superseded.

Christianity and imperial paganism are most

[276] *Ibid.*, IV, 15.25.

widely separated at the point where, historically, they come nearest each other.[277] This point of approach is found in the antithesis of Divus Imperator and Christus Dominus.

These two figures confront each other, the one the genius of paganism—the other the protagonist, representative, and Lord of Christianity.[278]

There is the same centrality of position in each case, the same solitary preëminence, the same ascriptions of heavenly power and glory. The similarity here is startling. There is no phraseology of devotion which the Christian could apply to Christ,—Lord, Saviour, Son of God, God,—which has not been applied to the Cæsars, and to their predecessors in royalty of other times and in faraway lands. But there the resemblance ends.

No one can possibly be blind, whether Christian or not, to the vast difference in character between the paganism which deified the Cæsars and the Christianity which worshiped Christ. On the one hand, a fawning sycophancy, where there was not abject superstition, deep despair and "unfathomable corruption"; on the other, a lofty the-

[277] Dill (*op. cit.*, pp. 622, 3) says almost the same thing with respect to Mithraism: "One great weakness of Mithraism lay precisely here—that in place of the narrative of a Divine life, instinct with human sympathy, it (Mithraism) had only to offer the cold symbolism of a cosmic legend."

[278] For the pagan view of this contrast see Julian: *Caesares*, Herthein's Ed., p. 431. Julian seizes upon Christ's attitude toward the sinner for his attack.

ism, a pure morality, a sane, sober, unified grasp of truth, a joy of life and a deathless hope. But that is not the core of the difference. That difference is focused in the two contrasted figures of Cæsar and Christ.

For words which but reveal the pitiful human weakness, the absurdity and the baseness of the greatest of the Cæsars, when applied to Christ, are like a cluster of jewels which belong to the sunlight to which they add nothing, but from which they gather and reflect unimaginable splendors.

For, after all, the problem of religion is not to produce descriptive epithets, but a personality to fit them. Here paganism failed. Her deified Cæsars could not always fill, let alone adorn, the robes of royalty, to say nothing of the more august garments of deity. While the humble Galilean, whose Kingdom was not of this world, whose crown was of thorns and whose robe was one of mockery, brought heaven to earth and made real to men the glory of the Unseen and Eternal.

[Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρὸς, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀλήθειας.

[Θεὸν οὐδεὶς εὥρακεν πώποτε ὁ μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

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tion. I have not ventured to include any work, ancient or modern, which I have not consulted and many even of these have been omitted. Moreover, I have not allowed myself to form any important judgment except on the basis of an ancient text. To that extent my opinions, right or wrong, are my own.

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